GRAN TORINO

by
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DOUBLE NICKEL
ENTERTAINMENT

Double Nickel Entertainment
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INT. CHURCH.

We're at the funeral of Dorothy Kowalski. In attendance are mostly old folks, their offspring and several bored teenagers.

WALT KOWALSKI stands towards the front of the church. He speaks to an older Man in a bulky, out-of-date suit.

OLDER MAN
I'm real sorry about Dorothy, Walt. She was a real peach.

WALT
Thanks for coming, Al.

Walt Kowalski looks young for his age. He has slate blue eyes, physically fit and has had the same buzz cut hairstyle since getting out of the military in 1953.

Walt is also a perfectionist. Nothing escapes his hawklike eyes, eyes that pierce and judge.

Walt looks around at how the young people have dressed at his wife's funeral. His eyes narrow at his Granddaughter's belly button ring.

WALT
Jesus Christ.

Walt's two sons, MITCH and STEVE, watch their Father from across the pews.

MITCH
Look at the Old Man glaring at Ashley. He can't even tone it down at Mom's funeral?

STEVE
What do you expect? Dad's still living in the 50's. He expects his granddaughter to dress a little more modestly.

MITCH
Yeah, well your kid's wearing a Timberwolves jersey. I'm sure Dad appreciates that.

STEVE
My point is that there's nothing anyone can do that won't disappoint the Old Man. It's inevitable. That's why we stopped doing Thanksgivings;
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

STEVE (CONT'D)
the deal with the boat motor, the broken bird bath, it's always something.

MITCH
What are we going to with him? Don't you think he'll get in trouble by himself over in the old neighborhood?

STEVE
Why don't you have him move in with you?

MITCH
Ha ha.

INT. CHURCH - LATER.

The choir sings the Beatitudes.

Walt looks around disgustedly at the people gathered as one woman looks through her day planner, an old guy dozes and his Granddaughter Ashley applies nail polish.

FATHER JANOVICH, the very young parish priest steps up to the alter and delivers the Eulogy for Walt's wife.

Walt sits ramrod straight and listens to the thin, weak, unconvincing words of Father Janovich.

FATHER JANOVICH
Death ... is often a bittersweet occasion to us Catholics. Bitter in the pain it causes the deceased... and their families. Sweet to those who know the salvation that awaits them. And some may ask, what is death. Is it the end? Or is it the beginning? And what is life? What is this thing we call life?

WALT
Jesus.

Walt coughs. He takes a handkerchief and wipes his lips. He looks down and notices a speck of BLOOD on the white cloth.

INT. WALT'S HOUSE - SAME.

The house is crammed with people following the service.

Walt doesn't know what to do with himself. He has to keep busy. Steve steps over to his father.

CONTINUED:

STEVE
A lot of people showed up after the service.

WALT
Yeah, well, I spose they knew there'd be plenty of ham. I think I'll go downstairs and get some more chairs.

STEVE
I'll do it, Dad.

WALT
Naw, we need them now, not next week.

INT. CELLAR - SAME.

Grandsons Josh, Daniel and David look through boxes in the cellar. A box of old Korea War photos are pawed through.

Josh holds up a black-n-white PHOTO - a young WALT looks utterly exhausted, behind him six bodies are sprawled dead on the ground.

DAVID
Is that Dad?

DANIEL
No, it's Grandpa Walt.

Josh turns the photo over and reads it...

JOSH
Third Platoon, E company, March second, 1952, Korea.

DANIEL
Where's Korea?

JOSH
Hell if I know?

David holds up a MEDAL.

DAVID
Cool, I found a medal.

They hear someone coming downstairs. By the time Walt descends the staircase, they boys sit on the couch, pretending to be doing nothing.

CONTINUED:

Walt gives them a hard look as he grabs some chairs.

UPSTAIRS - People eat and chat. Ashley marches over to her parents KAREN and Mitch.

ASHLEY
How long do we have to stay, this ghetto is a dead zone for my cell and I'm bored.

Walt stands behind them with an armful of folding chairs, he overheard his Granddaughter. Mitch and Karen are embarrassed.

MITCH
Ashley, honey. Why don't you help Grandpa Walt with the chairs?

ASHLEY
Me?

KAREN
Yes you.

ASHLEY
Grandpa Walt, can I help you with the chairs.

WALT
I'll take care of it, you just painted your nails.

Walt opens the folding chairs and looks out the window. It's snowing. Walt puts on his coat, he almost looks relieved to get out of the house.

WALT (CONT'D)
I'd better salt the sidewalk before someone falls and breaks a hip.

Walt taps the floor with his boot and DAISY, his very, very, very old DOG follows him outside.

EXT. WALT'S HOUSE - EVENING.

Walt carefully shovels his sidewalk. He deliberately stops at the boundary of his property.

The reason for this is that Walt's neighbors are now mostly Asians who moved into the houses that once belonged to Polish families.

CONTINUED:

Next door to Walt's house some sort of party is going on. Walt can see through the window that the living room is jammed with at least forty people, all Asians, all Hmong.

And this is a problem for Walt, because Walt is a full-blown, unrepentant racist.

Walt lights a cigarette and speaks to his dog, Daisy.

WALT
Jesus Christ, how many swamp rats can they cram into a living room?

Walt spits in the snow and walks back to the garage.

INT. GARAGE - SAME.

Walt steps inside and catches Ashley sneaking a cigarette. She has pulled back the canvas tarp that covers his pride and joy, his beloved 1972 GRAN TORINO.

The Gran Torino is in mint condition. It has been babied since the day it rolled off the line.

Ashley tosses her cigarette when she sees Grandpa Walt.

ASHLEY
Wow, Grandpa, when'd you get the vintage car?

Walt looks at her for a second, then steps on her still burning cigarette before answering.

WALT
1972.

ASHLEY
I never knew you had a cool old car.

WALT
It's only been in here since before you were born.

ASHLEY
So, what are you like going to do with it like, when ... you die?

Walt lights up an smoke -

WALT
Jesus, Joseph and Mary.

CONTINUED:

Walt pulls the cover back over the Gran Torino.

ASHLEY
Then what about that super cool retro couch in the den, I'm going to State next year and I don't have, like, any furniture?

Walt walks out without commenting.

BACK IN WALT'S HOUSE.

The doorbell rings and Walt opens the door. Standing there is TAO, a sixteen year old HMONG boy. Walt scowls.

TAO is slight, he has long hair, long lashes, but is very good looking - like an Asian Jonny Depp.

WALT
Who the hell are you?

TAO (VERY QUIETLY)
I'm Tao, I live next door.

WALT
What?! Speak up boy, get the shit out of your mouth. What do you want?

TAO
Do you have jumper cables? My uncle's car is old and...

WALT
No. And have some goddamned respect zipper head, we're mourning over here.

Walt slams the door in Tao's face.

Walt turns and is suddenly cornered by Father Janovich. Walt hates situations like this.

FATHER JANOVICH
How you holding up, Walt?

WALT
Mr. Kowalski.

FATHER JANOVICH
Huh?

CONTINUED:

WALT
It's Mr. Kowalski, not Walt.

FATHER JANOVICH
Right, Mr. Kowalski. Your wife and I became quite close these last few months. She asked that I watch over you when she passed on. I told her I watch out for my entire flock, but she made me promise I'd keep an extra sharp eye on you.

WALT
I appreciate your kindness to my wife and now that you've spoken your peace, why don't you move on to the next sheep?

Walt starts to steps away, but Father Janovich blocks him.

FATHER JANOVICH
Dorothy mentioned specifically that it was her wish for you to go to confession. She said she couldn't remember the last time you went.

WALT
Is that so?

FATHER JANOVICH
It is.

Walt drains his lowball glass.

WALT
Well, I confess I never much liked church and only went because of the wife. And I confess I have no desire to confess to a *boy* who is fresh out of the seminary.

EXT. WALT'S HOUSE - LATER.

People are leaving Walt's house. A mass of shuffling, stiff-jointed old Pollacks.

Right next door - walking the opposite direction are more Hmong going up the sidewalk. They laugh and chatter and carry big dishes of food and fruit. They are a happy bunch compared to the dour crowd exiting Walt's home.

CONTINUED:

The Hmong are going to a birth ceremony. A three-day-old baby is named and three souls are located for the newborn.

CUT TO:

Walt leans over a car that contains two shivering old ladies from the funeral. He hooks up the jumper cables to their dead battery.

Mitch, Karen, Ashley and Josh pull up next to Walt in a brand new Toyota Land Cruiser. Mitch opens the window.

MITCH
I'd really like to help Dad, but we have to get the kids home, they're getting restless.

Walt just looks at the TOYOTA EMBLEM on the Land Cruiser and then gives Mitch a disgusted glance.

WALT
Fine. Go.

MITCH
I'll call in a few, see how you're doing.

Walt nods and lights a cigarette as they drive off.

WALT
Kill you to buy American.

INT. LAND CRUISER - SAME.

MITCH
Did you see him look at the truck? It's always Rice-Burner this or Jap-Buggy that. Even at Mom's funeral, he can't let it go.

KAREN
At least he didn't say anything this time.

MITCH
He didn't have to.

KAREN
Well, what do you expect? The man worked at a Ford plant for twenty-eight years.

CONTINUED:

MITCH
And I suppose that's my goddamned fault?

BACK ON WALT. Walt gets his guests' engine running.

As they drive off, Walt hears faint SINGING. Walt looks into his neighbor's backyard and can't believe his eyes.

The Hmong all sing and chant as three CHICKENS have their heads sliced off, right there in the yard.

The chickens are held up and everyone chants louder. It's a sacrifice. Walt spits in the snow and says to Daisy.

WALT
Barbarians. Goddamned barbarians.

INT. HMONG HOUSE NEXT DOOR - SAME.

The house is a buzz of activity. The older Hmong speak their native language, the younger generation speaks both English and Hmong.

Hmong is subtitled when necessary.

Tao's GRANDmother (Phong) complains to a MAN.

PHONG (SUBTITLED)
There's no man in this house, that's why my daughter should remarry. Being a second wife is better than having a woman be the head of the household. It's not our way.

MAN (SUBTITLED)
What about Tao?

PHONG (SUBTITLED)
What about him?

MAN (SUBTITLED)
He's the man in the house.

PHONG (SUBTITLED)
Tao's not a man. (He gestures) Look at him in the kitchen, washing dishes like a woman. Even his sister gives him orders and he obeys.

CONTINUED:

The CAMERA pans to the kitchen where TAO washes a pile of dishes. A older relative drops dishes in the sink, without acknowledging Tao's presence. It's clearly a insult.

In the LIVING ROOM the Hmong 'Soul Calling' ceremony starts it's next phase. An elder, the family SHAMAN is present and begins the ritual.

As the entire Hmong family gathers to watch. Tao slips on his coat and goes out the back door.

EXT. TAO'S HOUSE - SAME.

Tao wobbles as he peddles his bike through the snow.

Tao passes Walt's garage and is startled as Walt appears from a shadow, JUMPER CABLES in his hands. They make eye contact as Tao passes.

Walt spits in the snow and looks down at Daisy.

WALT
I thought these zips were supposed to be such hard workers. Christ, I had my own car when I was his age.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT.

Tao exits the store, gets on his bike and rides off.

A few blocks away, Tao rides past a snowbank when -

WHAM! A HOCKEY STICK is thrown through the spokes of his front wheel. Tao flies over the handlebars into the snow.

A chorus of laughter is heard. Three LATINOS stand around the stunned, prone Tao.

HEAD LATINO
Whatta you gonna do, gook? You gonna 'Kung Fu' us?

Tao just lays there as Latino #2 picks up his bike.

LATINO #2
Surprised it ain't a girls bike.

The Latinos laugh. Tao remains on the ground.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HEAD LATINO
You gonna get up or what?

Tao doesn't move.

HEAD LATINO
Tell you what, I'll let you take the first swing. You drop me and you can have your bike back.

Tao smiles, he can't help it.

HEAD LATINO
What the fuck you smiling at gook? Something funny?

He grabs Tao by the jacket and pulls him to his feet.

HEAD LATINO
You better get the fuck outta here, bitch.

He pushes Tao backwards. Tao falls back into the snow. This time Tao crab-walks back away from the Latinos.

The Latinos stroll away with Tao's bike.

EXT. WALT'S HOUSE - SUNNY SPRING MORNING.

Title - THREE MONTHS LATER.

Walt is going about the chores of spring cleaning.

Walt looks around with disdain at his neighbors' houses. Walt's property is perfectly kept, whereas his neighbors' houses are rundown.

Walt's eyes linger on every defect, gutter hangs, ripped screen doors, peeling paint. One neighbor has installed a chicken coup.

Walt looks down at Daisy -

WALT
Damn chinks let their yards go to hell. Polarski would turn over in his grave if he could see what they did to his lawn.

Tao walks past. Walt watches him pass.

CONTINUED:

WALT (CONT'D)
I don't know why these goddamned slopes had to move to my block. This used to be a nice neighborhood.

EXT. TAO'S HOUSE - SAME.

Tao nods to an older woman rocking in a broken rocking chair. PHONG nods back to Tao, then turns her evil eye back on Walt whom she's been seething at all morning.

PHONG (SUBTITLED)
Why doesn't that stupid, hairy white man move? He must be too dumb to realize he's not welcome here. All the *Mee-khah* left in the neighborhood should just move away. Look at him strut like a rooster.

She sees Walt glance at her and spit. Phong glares back and spits beetle juice, which has turned her teeth black.

INT. WALT'S HOUSE - DAY.

Daisy snoozes next to the front door. The doorbell rings, Daisy doesn't even move. Walt walks to the front door holding a roll of duct tape. The doorbell rings again.

Walt looks down at Daisy -

WALT
Jesus Christ dog, have you gone totally deaf?

Walt opens the door. Standing on his front step is Father Janovich.

FATHER JANOVICH
Hi there, Walt.

WALT
Listen son, you're not my barber, you're not a friend, so why in the hell do you think you can call me Walt?

FATHER JANOVICH
Sorry, ... Mr. Kowalski.

WALT
So, what are you peddling now?

CONTINUED:

FATHER JANOVICH
Oh, nothing. Thought I'd drop by and see how you were doing. Haven't seen you in church in awhile.

WALT
Okay. You've done your good deed, now why don't you run along.

FATHER JANOVICH
I'd really like to talk, Mr. Kowalski.

WALT
I don't think so, kid. Sorry.

FATHER JANOVICH
Why? Do you have a problem with me, Mr. Kowalski?

WALT
You don't want to know.

FATHER JANOVICH
No, I do.

WALT
The problem is I think you're an overeducated, 27 year old virgin who holds the hands of superstitious old women and promises them eternity.

Walt shuts his front door in Father Janovich's face.

EXT. STREET - DAY.

Tao walks down the street, his head in a book. He finally realizes there's a blue Chevy following slowly behind him.

The Blue Chevy is now parallel with Tao and keeps pace with his step. Tao looks over to the occupants of the Chevy.

It's two LATINOS. Tao quickens his pace, but the Chevy easily keeps up with Tao.

LATINO DRIVER
Is you a boy or a girl, I can't tell?

LATINO #2
What you reading, gook? 'JackAss And The Rice Stalk'?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tao laughs, but keeps walking.

LATINO DRIVER
That's right, you keep walking. Fucking slopes everywhere you look, man. Why you gooks come up in here and fuck up our neighborhood?

Down the street - is a suped up HONDA CIVIC with a big SPOILER on the back. Inside are five Hmong gangbangers.

The Hmong gangbangers notice Tao being followed by the Latinos. Spider, the driver, squints and then points at Tao.

SPIDER
Dude, that's my little cousin, Tao.

SMOKIE
You sure about that Spider?

SPIDER
I'm sure. Do we do something ... or what?

Smokie is the gang leader. He looks at Tao for a second.

SMOKIE
Your cousin tight with anyone?

SPIDER
No, he flies solo, Smokie.

SMOKIE
Okay. Let's go help out our little cousin.

Smokie nods to Spider, they roar up and stop right across from Tao and the Latino's car.

SMOKIE
You better not be giving my bro here a hard time or you're gonna wish you never been born.

LATINO DRIVER
Oh goody, more Rice Niggers.

The Latino Driver smiles and flashes a PISTOL.

A Hmong kid in the back seat opens the door and displays a sub-machine gun. The Latinos are way out-gunned.

CONTINUED:

LATINO #2
Fucking Viet Cong swamp rats. Go back to your fucking rice paddy.

The Latinos screech their tires and are gone. The Hmongs in the car smile and congratulate themselves.

Tao simply keeps walking down the street!

SMOKIE
Where the fuck does he think he's going? Turn us the around and go after that cousin of yours.

They swing a U-turn and pull up to Tao, keeping pace with him as he walks.

SPIDER
Hey Cuz, slow down, where you going? You should really think about hanging with us, man. If we all stick together, shit like that won't happen, with those Spicks.

Tao nods as he walks, but doesn't answer.

SPIDER (CONT'D)
You can't be such a little girl. You join up with us, we'll keep you out of trouble, cuz.

Tao looks at the sub-machine gun cradled by the Hmong gangbanger in the back seat.

Smokie takes this all in. He looks down the street and sees that in a half block, Tao will have to pass a group of Latino gangbanger types.

SMOKIE
You think about it and we'll see you tomorrow.

EXT. TAO'S HOUSE - DAY.

Tao digs in the garden. Tao's younger sister SUE sits and reads 'JANE' magazine on the porch.

The tricked-out Honda with Blue Neon lights pulls up. Spider, Smokie and two other Hmong gangbangers get out.

CONTINUED:

SPIDER
Hey Cuz. Hey Sue.

SUE
What do you want?

SPIDER
Came to talk to my cousin Tao.

Smokie looks over at Sue.

SMOKIE
Spider, who's the *other* cousin?

SUE laughs at the name 'Spider'. Sue is seventeen, has long straight hair with red highlights.

SUE
'Spider'? Is that what he just called you, Fong?

SPIDER
This is my *little* cousin, Sue.

Smokie takes off his sunglasses and smiles at Sue.

SMOKIE
Hey Sue ... how old are you, girl?

SUE
Mentally, I'm way too old for you. I'm going inside.

SPIDER
That's right, go inside while the men talk.

SUE
Yeah, that's exactly what I'm doing, *Fong*.

Sue rolls her eyes and goes inside. Smokie stares at Tao.

SPIDER
You think about what we talked about?

A PAUSE. Smokie watches Tao carefully, offers him a cigarette. Tao shakes his head 'no' and looks at the ground.

CONTINUED:

SMOKIE
That's exactly the point, Tao. Spider told me how everyone thinks you're a push over, how everybody walks all over you and shit. I mean, look at you, out here working in the garden like a woman.

Tao nods slightly, but still looks at the ground.

SMOKIE (CONT'D)
It ain't no big thing. You just need a little guidance.

Tao looks up at Smokie. Tao looks a little skeptical.

SMOKIE
It's true, man. Shit, I used to be kind of a quiet little punk like you, everybody fucking with me. But finally I said 'no more'. You, you're lucky Tao, we got your back. Me? I didn't have nobody. Had to mold my own tribe.

SPIDER
Smokie's right. We're family, right? You with us or what?

SMOKIE
I swear brother, we're the best friends you'll ever have. And anyone fucks with you, they're fucked.

SPIDER
Come on, man.

Tao clears his throat and speaks for the first time.

TAO
What do I have to do?

Smokie points to Walt's open garage.

SMOKIE
Spider mentioned your neighbor of your's.

CUT TO:

ZOOM IN - There it sits with the tarp rolled back, Walt's gorgeous, shining GRAN TORINO.

SMOKIE O.S.
Now that's a car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPIDER O.S.
Shit ya. 1972 Gran Torino fastback. Cobra jet engine. Mint.

Next to the garage, Walt is bent over planting tomatoes. Walt notices the Hmong punks looking at him.

INT. VFW.

Walt sits at the bar in the VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) drinking with old buddies and cracking off color jokes.

WALT
I got one. A Mexican, a Jew and a colored guy walk into a bar, the bartender looks up at them and says - *'get the fuck out.'*

The gang laughs, until they see Father Janovich steps up to the bar. He smiles as he recognizes several faces.

FATHER JANOVICH
So, here's where my flock congregates when they're not in church.

MEL
Hiya, Father J.

FATHER JANOVICH
Hi Mel. Hey there, Darrel.

DARREL
Hello Father.

FATHER JANOVICH
Hi Walt.

Walt says nothing. He just sips his beer.

DARREL
What brings you in here, Father? The meat raffle?

FATHER JANOVICH
No. I came down to talk to Walt, if that's okay.

Mel and Darrel look at Walt. It puts him on the spot.

CONTINUED:

WALT
I have to hand it to you, padre. You are persistent.

FATHER JANOVICH
I promised your wife.

Walt looks over at Mel and Darrel and then back at Father Janovich.

WALT
Oh Jesus Christ, let's grab a booth.

INT. VFW BOOTH - SAME.

The waitress comes over.

WALT
I'll have a Pabst and a shot. What are you having, Father?

FATHER JANOVICH
I'll have a Diet Coke.

WALT
Bullshit, this is a bar, what do you want to *drink?*

FATHER JANOVICH
Ummmm ... I'll have a gin and tonic.

WALT
Attaboy.

The Waitress leaves.

WALT
So, what do you want?

FATHER JANOVICH
I promised your wife I'd get you to go to confession.

WALT
Jesus Christ, why'd you do that?

FATHER JANOVICH
She was very insistent. She made me.

CONTINUED:

WALT
You sure are fond of promising people stuff you can't deliver on.

FATHER JANOVICH
Let's talk about something else.

WALT
Like what?

FATHER JANOVICH
Life and death.

WALT
What would you know about it?

FATHER JANOVICH
I'd like to think I know a lot. I'm a priest.

WALT
You stand at the altar and preach on and on about life and death without knowing anything other then what you learned in priest school. Everything you say sounds like it's out of the Rookie Preachers Handbook.

FATHER JANOVICH
I don't know about that...

Walt waves his hand and cuts him off.

WALT
'Death is bittersweet? Bitter in the pain, sweet in the salvation. That's what you know of life and death?' Good God, it's pathetic.

FATHER JANOVICH
What do *you* know, Mr. Kowalski?

WALT
Plenty. I lived with death for three years in Korea. We shot people, we stabbed them with bayonets, we hacked seventeen year old kids to death with shovels, for Christ's sake. I did things that won't leave me till the day I die, horrible things, things I have to live with.

CONTINUED:

FATHER JANOVICH
And what about life?

Walt has to think for a second. He struggles with his answer.

WALT
Well ... I survived the war ... got married ... and raised a family.

FATHER JANOVICH
Sounds like you know more about death than you do living.

Walt downs a shot.

WALT
Maybe so.

INT. WALT'S BEDROOM - THAT SAME NIGHT.

Walt hears a sound and wakes up. He's very groggy, he had plenty to drink at the VFW.

WALT
Daisy?

The dog sleeps in her bed in the corner. Walt looks at the clock; it's 3:48am.

Walt looks out his bedroom window. He sees the faint beam of a flashlight in his garage.

WALT
Son of a bitch.

Walt pulls on his robe, opens the closet and pulls out the big, 30-06. M1 Garand Rifle he took home from Korea.

Walt slides a magazine into the top of the M1 and chambers a round with a loud SNAP.

INT. GARAGE - SECONDS LATER.

The light flips on and before he can blink, Tao is face to face with the barrel of Walt's M1 RIFLE.

CONTINUED:

Walt is silent, he has one eye closed so he can better aim at Tao's forehead - which is nine inches away. Tao drops the tool he was holding, it bounces with a loud metallic clang.

Tao backs away, his eye's wide with terror. As Tao backs up, Walt advances, step for step.

Tao trips over a garden hose, which causes Walt to trip. They both start to fall. The lightbulb is bumped with the rifle barrel and swings back and forth.

As Walt hits the garage floor, he accidentally FIRES THE RIFLE. The bullet goes through a big, metal Hamm's Beer sign on the wall.

Tao scrambles to his feet and jumps like a deer over Walt. Tao runs out of the garage and into the night.

Walt lies on the floor for a second, stunned. Sweat runs down his forehead. He coughs up blood. The lightbulb still swings, casting odd shadows in the garage.

WALT
Shit.

EXT. ALLEY - SAME.

Tao scrambles down the alley. Parked off to the side is Spider's Honda. Spider opens the door.

SPIDER
Get in, get in!

Tao runs right past him. Spider guns the motor and pulls in front of Tao. Smokie, Spider and another gangbanger get out.

SMOKIE
Get in Tao.

TAO
No way. No Fucking way. Leave me alone!

Smokie, Spider and the other gangbanger grab Tao.

SPIDER
I vouched for you Tao because you're family and you're with us now.

Tao struggles.

CONTINUED:

TAO (CONT'D)
He shot at me! I'm out! I'm out!!!

Tao squirms out of Smokie's grasp. Smokie yells at Tao as he runs away...

SMOKIE
Don't fool yourself, Tao. You don't join us and bail. Dumb mother fucker.

SPIDER
Should we go after him?

SMOKIE
Naw, he's got nowhere to go. Let's get out of here.

INT. GARAGE - AFTERNOON.

Walt drills heavy gauge screen mesh over the windows on the garage. The phone rings and Walt answers.

WALT
Hello?

MITCH O.S.
Morning Dad, it's your number one son, Mitch.

WALT
It's *one* in the afternoon.

The CAMERA now intercuts between Walt and Mitch in the kitchen of his huge, modern suburban house.

MITCH
Right, good afternoon, then.

WALT
So, what do you want?

MITCH
Me? Nothing. What would I want?

WALT
I don't know. Your wife already went through all of your mother's jewelry.

CONTINUED:

MITCH
No. I was just wondering how you are, what's going on, anything new in the old neighborhood?

Walt looks at the bullet hole in his Hamm's Beer sign.

WALT
Nope.

MITCH
Great. Smooth sailing then?

WALT
Yup.

There's a very painful pause in the conversation.

MITCH (CONT'D)
Well good. ... Say Dad?

WALT
Uh huh.

MITCH
Do you still know that guy from the plant who has Viking season tickets?

EXT. WALT'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

Walt has parked the Gran Torino at an angle across his driveway. Walt mutters as rubs Turtle Wax on his car.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - THAT AFTERNOON.

Walt fishes out a soft pack of cigarettes and lights one. He exhales as he looks at his car.

It's stunning. It absolutely sparkles. The chrome shines, the tires look new and the paint is waxed and polished.

Walt looks up again and his eyes sweep the neighborhood in defiance. A couple of Hmong teenagers look at the car.

WALT (MUTTERS)
That's right, *ain't she pretty*.

CONTINUED:

Walt drops down heavily into an old lawn chair and pops open a can of Pabst.

DISSOLVE TO:

WALT'S DRIVEWAY - EVENING.

Dusk is falling. Walt finally gets up, folds up his lawnchair and walks stiffly back into the garage.

Walt flips on the outdoor light, highlighting the Gran Torino still sitting at an angle in the driveway. The whole scene looks like a mid-sixties car ad in Popular Mechanics.

Walt goes in the back door and a moment later the kitchen light comes on. The Gran Torino remains in the driveway.

It's a challenge, an invitation. Walt is daring the thief to come back. And Walt's ready this time.

EXT. WALT'S STREET - LATER THAT NIGHT.

The tricked out Honda drives up, but doesn't stop at Walt's. It pulls up in front of Tao's house. Tao and Sue exchange looks out on the front step.

Smokie, Spider and two others get out, walking confidently up the sidewalk towards them. They grin, they're cocky.

SPIDER
Hey Cuz. What's up?

TAO
What are you doing here?

SPIDER
Be happy. We've got good news.

SUE
Oh really? What's that?

SMOKIE
We're giving you another shot.

TAO
I don't think so.

SMOKIE
You blew it the first time. We've got another little inauguration planned for you. This time there'll be no mistakes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUE
Another, big tough gangbanger with *'little-man'* complex.

Smokie leers at Sue. It makes her uncomfortable.

SMOKIE
I got my eye on you too, little girl.

SUE
Whatever.

SMOKIE
Come on, Tao. Let's go.

Tao says nothing. He looks at the ground.

SPIDER
He said, let's go.

SMOKIE
Come on, man. Nobody's gonna get hurt. We'll take care of you.

SUE
Don't go Tao.

SMOKIE
You mind your own business, girl.

Two Hmong gangbangers grab Tao by the arms.

The front door swings open and there stands a glaring Phong.

PHONG (SUBTITLED)
Leave my grandson alone! I know what you are. Go away and don't come back.

SMOKIE
That old woman's got bigger balls than you. You always let little girls and old ladies fight for you?

Tao tries to squirm away. Smokie grabs him by the hair and opens his coat to reveal the PISTOL in his belt.

SMOKIE
I'm not gonna say it again. Let's go. Now.

Tao is shoved towards the car.

CONTINUED:

Suddenly - Sue jumps on the back of one of the gangbangers and knocks him to the ground. Tao breaks free.

SUE
Run, Tao, run!

Sue is slapped to the ground.

SUE (CONT'D)
RUN!!

Tao is tackled by Smokie and punched in the face. Tao's mother comes out the front door.

Smokie and Spider pull Tao towards the car as the other gangbangers keep Mom, Grandma and Sue at bay.

A middle-aged Hmong Man from across the street comes into the yard. All the gangbangers overreact and pull their pistols. The middle-aged Hmong Man gets in Spider's face and is cracked across the jaw with a pistol barrel.

Tao back-peddles away from Spider and Smokie. It becomes a pushing, rolling, surging melee.

This mess boils over and spills into Walt's front yard.

EXT. WALT'S YARD – SAME.

The gangbangers, Tao, his mother, grandmother and Sue all struggle on Walt's painstakingly maintained lawn.

A ceramic Lawn Gnome is knocked over and breaks.

And before anyone can blink, WALT has the muzzle of his big 30-06. M1 Garand Rifle pointing at Smokie's face.

WALT
Get off my lawn.

SMOKIE
Listen old man you don't want...

WALT
I said get off my lawn. Now.

Walt's calm demeanor is unnerving to the gangbangers. The guns in their hands seem tiny compared to the big military rifle Walt holds.

CONTINUED:

SMOKIE
Are you fucking crazy? Go back in your house old man.

WALT
Get off my lawn.

SMOKIE
I'm not fucking around, Gramps.

Walt spits out the side of his mouth. He grins.

WALT
Don't think for a second I won't blow a big hole in your face *and* it won't bother me a bit, not anymore than if I shot a deer. Now get off my goddamned lawn.

Two of the Hmong gangbangers take a step back. Walt senses their fear. Only Smokie holds his ground.

WALT (CONT'D)
Believe me kid, I'll blow your damn head off, go back to bed and sleep like a baby. I couldn't care less.

SMOKIE
I'm not gonna warn you again!

Walt laughs...

WALT
You're nothing to me. In Korea, we stacked fucks like you five feet high and used you as sandbags.

Complete silence, there's no sound anywhere in the neighborhood. All eyes are on Walt.

Walt CLICKS OFF the safety on the M1 Garand Rifle.

Smokie and the gangbangers give Walt fierce looks, but melt back towards their car.

As they get into the car - Smokie has to say something.

SMOKIE
You better watch yourself old man.

The Honda screeches its tires and goes off down the street.

Walt looks at Tao, Sue, Mom and Grandma who stand in stunned silence in his front yard.

CONTINUED:

A PAUSE. Finally Sue speaks up...

SUE
Thank you.

Walt lowers his Rifle and spits on the ground.

WALT
I *said* get off my lawn.

INT. WALT'S HOUSE - NEXT MORNING.

We hear a sound outside. Walt grabs his Rifle, swings open the front door and leads with the barrel.

CUT TO:

EXT. WALT'S FRONT PORCH - SAME.

Walt looks around and slowly lowers his Rifle.

His front porch is covered with FLOWERS and FRUIT and GIFTS of food. There must be a dozen different gifts piled there.

Daisy comes out and stretches on the porch, before putting her nose in a food basket.

WALT
Bad dog. Bad deaf, dumb, blind dog.

EXT. WALT'S HOUSE - DAY.

Walt carries three big Bouquets of flowers to the trash. He dumps them on top of other gifts he received from the Hmongs. His garbage is overflowing.

Coming down the alley is another Hmong couple, they smile carrying a basket filled with Asian vegetables.

Walt holds up his hand like a traffic cop.

WALT
No. No more.

The Hmong Couple nod, say something with a smile and turn around.

CONTINUED:

NEXT DOOR - Tao, his mother and Sue argue in the yard. They gesture towards Walt's house. The woman buzz around Tao, all speaking in his ear at the same time.

Phong yells at them from the porch, but they ignore her.

Walt watches as the mother and Sue march Tao towards his house. Tao looks like a whipped dog.

WALT
Why won't these people leave me alone?

Walt walks out to meet them at his property line and puts up his hands, indicating they've come far enough.

Sue holds up a plant.

SUE
We brought you some shallots to plant in your garden.

WALT
I don't want them.

SUE
They're perennials, they come back every year.

WALT
No. You keep them. Why do you people keep giving me all this garbage?

Sue is a little taken aback.

SUE
Because ... because you saved Tao.

WALT
No I didn't. All I did was get a bunch of jabbering gooks off my lawn.

SUE
Well, you're a hero to the neighborhood.

WALT
No, I'm not.

SUE
Too bad, they think you are and that's why they're bringing you the gifts.

WALT
Just take your plant and leave me alone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Walt turns and starts to walk away.

Tao's mother speaks rapidly in Hmong to Sue. They look at Tao and then to Walt.

SUE
There's another thing.

WALT
What?

SUE
This is my mother Vu, I'm Sue and this is my brother, Tao. We live next door.

WALT
So?

SUE
Tao is here to apologize.

Sue shoots a hard look at Tao, who's shifts uncomfortably.

TAO
I'm sorry.

WALT
For what?

TAO
For trying to steal your car.

Walt's eyes go wide in recognition. He turns white with rage.

WALT
Get this straight, I see you on my property again, you're done.

Walt turns on his heals and storms into his house.

INT. WALT'S ENTRY WAY.

The doorbell rings. Walt opens it to find Father Janovich standing on his front step.

FATHER JANOVICH
Good afternoon, Walt.

Walt's eyes narrow.

CONTINUED:

FATHER JANOVICH (CONT'D)
I mean, Mr. Kowalski.

WALT
I already told you I'm not going to confession.

FATHER JANOVICH
Why didn't you just call the police?

WALT
Pardon?

FATHER JANOVICH
I do work with some of the Hmong gangs and I heard there was some trouble in the neighborhood. Why didn't you call the police?

WALT
Oh, I prayed for them to show up, but guess what? No answer.

FATHER JANOVICH
What were you thinking? Someone could have been killed. We're talking life and death, here.

WALT
Not that it's any of your goddamned business, but when things happen quickly like that, you have to react. In Korea, we never *'called the police'* when a swarm of screaming gooks came pouring into our lines. We reacted.

FATHER JANOVICH
We're not in Korea, Mr. Kowalski.

Walt says nothing.

FATHER JANOVICH (CONT'D)
I've been thinking about our discussion on life and death. About what you said. About how you carry around the horrible things you were forced to do. Horrible things that won't leave you. It seems that it would do you good to unload some of that burden. Things done during war are terrible, being ordered to kill, killing to save others, killing to save yourself. You're right, those are things I don't know anything about.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FATHER JANOVICH (CONT'D)
But I do know about forgiveness. And I've seen a lot of men who have confessed their sins, admitted their guilt and left their burdens behind them. Stronger men than you. Men at war who were ordered to do appalling things and are now at peace.

Walt nods. Father Janovich threw a bull's-eye. Almost.

WALT
I'm impressed. You came with your guns loaded, for once.

FATHER JANOVICH
Thank you.

WALT
You have balls, Father. *And what you said*, you're right. I'm sure stronger men than me have found their salvation. *Hallelujah.* But there's one thing you're way wrong about.

FATHER JANOVICH
What's that, Mr. Kowalski?

WALT
The thing that haunts a guy is the stuff he *wasn't* ordered to do.

INT. OLD SCHOOL BARBERSHOP.

The old, balding BARBER finishes cutting Walt's hair.

BARBER
There, you look like a human being again. You shouldn't wait so long between haircuts, you cheap bastard.

WALT
I'm just amazed that you're still alive. I keep hoping you'll die and they'll get someone good in here, but you just hang in there, you dumb, Italian-Wop-Dago, you.

BARBER
That'll be ten dollars, Walt.

CONTINUED:

WALT
Ten dollars? Jesus Christ Martin, you keep raising the price. You sure you're not part Jew?

Martin the Barber laughs at Walt.

BARBER
It's been ten bucks for the last five years and you know it, you thick-skulled, old Pollack son of a bitch.

WALT
Here's ten, keep the change.

BARBER
See you in three weeks, you prick.

WALT
If you live that long, dipshit.

Walt and Martin shake hands and Walt walks out.

EXT. BARBERSHOP - SAME.

Walt gets in his old Ford pick-up and drives off. This is a very bad, rundown neighborhood.

EXT. SIDEWALK - SAME.

Sue walks with her ridiculous Wigger (urban white kid) boyfriend, TREY. Trey wears big baggy pants, a sports jersey and an Oakland Raiders visor upside down and backwards.

They walk past three BLACK GUYS leaning against a building. The tall black guy spots Sue and smiles.

TALL BLACK GUY
Hey Girl, you come over here and talk to me. Come on baby, don't be shy.

Trey and Sue move as far over on the sidewalk as they can to avoid the black guys. They try to ignore them.

TALL BLACK GUY (CONT'D)
Come on sweetie, don't be like that. You talk to me, don't be all stuck up and shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACROSS THE STREET - Walt waits at a stoplight. He watches Sue and Trey and the three black guys who block their path.

One black guy flips Trey's VISOR onto the ground. The tall guy makes 'kissy faces' at Sue as he touches his crotch.

Walt sits there for a second, he shouldn't help, but Walt solves every situation by being aggressive.

Walt drives off, then makes a U-turn.

The tall black guy now focuses on Trey.

TALL BLACK GUY
What are you sposed to be?

Trey puts up his hand to 'hi-five'. The tall black guy just looks at him.

TREY
Yo, it's cool, dog.

TALL BLACK GUY
What the fuck are you doing in my neighborhood, boy?

TREY
Nothing. We're going to Red Roost to get some CDs. That place is trippin, bro.

TALL BLACK GUY
What you call me, you fucking with me, bitch? You think you're funny?

TREY
Nothing. No.

TALL BLACK GUY
I'm warning you, boy. What you all come up in here for? You here to bring me this present?

TREY
Huh?

TALL BLACK GUY
This Oriental yummy for me? Don't worry, I'll take good care of her.

SUE
Great, another asshole with a fetish for Asian girls. God, it gets *so* old.

CONTINUED:

TALL BLACK GUY
What's your name girl?

SUE
My name? It's *'take your crude, overly obvious come-on to every woman who walks past and cram it'*. That's my name.

TALL BLACK GUY
You should keep your bitch on a leash, put a choke chain on this whore and yank.

SUE
Oh, of course, right to the stereotype thesaurus. Call me 'whore' and 'bitch' in the same sentence.

The tall black guy grabs Sue by the arm. Trey moves slightly towards Sue and is pushed down into a pile of garbage.

TALL BLACK GUY
You think you're pretty funny, don't you?

SUE
What are you gonna hit me, now? That'd pretty much complete the picture.

The tall black guy pushes Sue hard against the wall.

TALL BLACK GUY
You don't know when to quit.

The old, black pick-up pulls up and stops next to them. Sue, Trey and the black guys look over.

Walt sits behind the wheel, he looks right through the tall black guy.

TALL BLACK GUY
What the fuck you looking at old man?

WALT
You ... and your buddies. What's the matter with you? Don't any of you work? I see you lazy show-offs in the middle of the day, slowly walking across the street or harassing women. Nobody owes you bastards anything so go out and get a job instead of pushing little girls around, for Christ's sake.

CONTINUED:

TALL BLACK GUY
Why don't you get the fuck out of here, while I'll still let you.

BLACK GUY #2
That's right, bitch.

WALT
What makes you spooks think you can bully a couple kids with impunity?

TALL BLACK GUY
What?! Are you fucking crazy?

WALT
Look at me, slick. *You're* crazy if you thinking I'm fooling around.

TALL BLACK GUY
You *are* fucking crazy.

WALT
You have to be pretty goddamned dumb to think you can push people around without running into someone who will push back.

The black guys are a bit dumbfounded. Walt stares them down.

WALT (CONT'D)
But you might just be dumb enough *not* to recognize that your luck just ran out.

All bravado drains away from the black guys. Walt is a rock.

Walt grins slightly and spits on the ground.

TALL BLACK GUY
Fuck this guy. He ain't worth it.

The trio walks slowly across the street, forcing a car to miss a green light.

Trey puts his hand out to shake Walt's...

TREY
Man, thanks a lot, Mister.

Walt doesn't extend a hand, he let's Trey stand there like an idiot. Trey slowly lowers his arm.

Walt looks at Trey's outfit.

CONTINUED:

WALT
Go home clown ... and pull up your goddamned pants.

Walt turns to Sue.

WALT
Come on, I'll give you a ride.

INT. WALT'S TRUCK - DRIVING.

Walt and Sue drive in silence. Finally Sue speaks up.

SUE
So, what's with you, you have some sort of savior complex or something?

WALT
What in the hell's the matter with you? I thought all you Asian girls were supposed to be so smart. What are you doing walking around in that neighborhood? That's how you end up in the obituaries, that is if they can identify your body once they pull it out of the goddamned river.

SUE
I know, I know. Take it easy.

Walt looks at her for a second. She's not ruffled at all.

They drive.

WALT (CONT'D)
So, that goofball back there. He's your boyfriend?

SUE
Yeah, kind of, his name is Trey.

WALT
Why in the hell would you go out with a clown like that. Why don't you date one of your ... own ... one of those other ... Hu-mungs.

SUE
You mean, Hmong? We're Hmong, not *Hu-mung*.

CONTINUED:

WALT
Right. *Hmong*. What is a ... where is Hmong or whatever?

Sue laughs.

SUE
Wow?! You're so enlightened. Hmong isn't a place, it's a people. Hmong people come from different parts of Laos and Thailand and China.

WALT
Then why are you in my neigborhood, instead of back there?

SUE
It's a Vietnam thing. We fought on your side and when America quit, the Communists starting killing the Hmong, so we came over here.

Walt is quiet for a few seconds.

WALT
Why'd you pick Minnesota for Christ's sake? There's snow on the ground near half the year. Jungle people on the frozen tundra?

SUE
Hill people. We were *hill people*, not jungle people. *Boo-ga, boo-ga, boo-ga.*

WALT
Whatever.

SUE
Blame the Lutherans. They brought us to Minnesota.

WALT
Still, you'd think the cold would keep all the assholes away.

Sue laughs again at Walt's conscienceless racism.

SUE
Thanks for the ride.

CONTINUED:

WALT
Sure. ... You know, you seem okay. What the hell's the matter with your half-wit brother? He a little slow or something?

SUE
Tao is actually really bright, he just doesn't know which direction to go in.

WALT
Oh, poor Toad.

SUE
It's really common. Hmong girls over here fit in better, we adjust. The girls go to college, the boys go to jail.

EXT. WALT'S FRONT PORCH - EARLY MORNING.

Walt drinks coffee and reads the newspaper. He flips from section to section. Daisy's at his feet.

Next door, Phong sits watching Walt. He can see her mumbling under her breath.

WALT
Old hag, giving me the evil eye?

Walt opens the paper to the TV guide section and lingers at the HOROSCOPES for a second.

WALT (CONT'D)
Aw, what the hell...

Walt reads aloud to himself.

WALT (CONT'D)
Your birthday today; This year you have to make a choice between two life paths. Second chances come your way. Extraordinary events culminate in what might seem to be an anti-climax. Your lucky numbers are: 84, 23, 11, 78 and 99.

Walt drains his coffee and tosses the paper onto the porch.

WALT
What a load of crap.

Walt lights up a cigarette and exhales.

CONTINUED:

Walt watches as the only white woman on the block struggles to unload her groceries from her car. One of her bags rips.

Three teenagers walk past and laugh at her spilled groceries. One of them makes a crude gesture behind her back.

WALT
Christ all Friday. What's wrong with kids today?

Walt gets up to go help, but before he can get to the sidewalk, another neighbor has gone over to help...

Its TAO. Tao bends down and carries her bags up to her door.

WALT
Well, I'll be damned.

INT. WALT'S KITCHEN.

Mitch and Karen sit across from Walt. A small store-bought birthday cake sits in front of Walt.

Walt reads his birthday card. It's signed; Love Mitch, Karen, Ashley and Josh. ALL the signatures have been written in a woman's cursive style and with the same pen.

Mitch slides a wrapped gift across the table to Walt.

MITCH
Go ahead, Dad. Open it.

WALT
What is it?

MITCH
Just open it.

Walt opens the package, it's a Gopher Reaching Tool - the kind that has an alligator clamp so you can pick up objects that have fallen behind the stove, etc.

Walt looks at his son and daughter-in-law.

MITCH (CONT'D)
It's a Gopher. It's so you can reach stuff. You know, it's makes things easier.

KAREN
Here's one from me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAREN slides over a another wrapped gift. Walt opens it. It's a PHONE with really big numbers for old people.

KAREN
It's a phone.

WALT
(Emotionlessly) Thank you, Karen.

KAREN
I just thought ... we thought that it would ... make things easier.

WALT
Yeah, I see that.

KAREN
There's nothing wrong with making things less hard on yourself.

MITCH
Karen's right, Dad. You've worked hard your whole life. Maybe you should think about taking it a little easier?

Walt lights up a cigarette.

MITCH
And that's another thing, Dad. You should get rid of the coffin nails.

Walt says nothing.

MITCH (CONT'D)
And the house, now that Mom's gone, it's got to be alot to maintain, let alone clean ... and you're all alone in here.

It's worse than Walt thought. He puffs smoke.

KAREN
There's these great places now, these communities where you don't have to worry about mowing the lawn or shoveling snow. People who are like you, alert, active, but are alone and would benefit by being with other folks their own age.

MITCH
Dad, take a look. We brought some pamphlets.

CUT TO:

EXT. WALT'S HOUSE - SECONDS LATER.

Mitch and Karen storm out to their Land Cruiser. Mitch carries the Gopher Grabber Tool and Karen has the big numbered Phone in her hand.

MITCH
I told you, I told you this was a bad idea.

KAREN
I know, you were right.

MITCH
Son of a bitch! He just won't let anyone help him.

KAREN
Well, we tried. Now we can just drop it. No one can say we didn't try.

MITCH
To hell with him, kicking us out on his birthday?! We should've stayed home with Ashley and Josh. They knew better, they wouldn't even come. The goddamned kids are smarter than we are!

Mitch screeches the tires as they take off. Walt waits for them to clear out, before coming out on the porch with a can of Pabst.

Daisy comes out and lies at his feet.

Walt covers his mouth as he coughs. A dime sized circle of dark, red blood is left in the palm of his hand.

Walt looks at the blood as he takes another sip of beer.

EXT. WALT'S PORCH - EVENING.

Walt continues to sit on his porch, a long row of empty Pabst beer cans are lined up on the railing.

Walt looks at a photo in his wallet, his and Dorothy's wedding photo. Walt looks down at Daisy -

WALT
We miss Momma, don't we Daisy.

A vehicle pulls up to Tao's house. A party is in full swing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sue comes out and helps the Hmong women unload big platters of food and carry them to the house.

Sue catches Walt's gaze and steps over to his porch.

SUE
Hey Walt, what are you up to?

Walt points his index finger at the can of Pabst in his hand.

SUE (CONT'D)
We're having a barbecue. You want to come over?

WALT
What do you think?

SUE
There's tons of food.

WALT
I'll bet. Just keep your paws off my dog.

SUE
No worries, we only eat cats.

WALT
Really?

SUE
No, I'm kidding you moron. Come on, come on over. You can be my special guest.

WALT
I'm fine right here.

Walt reaches into the cooler for another beer. It's empty, just water and ice.

WALT
Son of a bitch.

SUE
What have you had to eat today, Walt?

WALT
A piece of cake and some beef jerky.

SUE
Come on over and get something to eat. We've got beer, too.

CONTINUED:

Walt exhales loudly -

WALT
Oh, what the hell. It's my birthday, I may as well drink with strangers instead of myself.

Walt gets up and walks with Sue towards her house.

SUE (CONT'D)
Happy Birthday, Wally.

WALT
Don't call me Wally.

INT. TAO'S HOUSE - KITCHEN.

Inside are thirty Hmong and Walt, who sticks out like a sore thumb. Total fish out of water.

Walt looks in the Refrigerator, Sue looks over his shoulder.

WALT
You do have a lot of beer, but no Pabst.

SUE
As they say, *When in Hmong*.

WALT
Ha ha. Are you sure it's okay I'm here? Everyone keeps looking at me and when I look back, they look at the ground.

SUE
It's fine.

Phong appears from the crowd and points at Walt.

PHONG (SUBTITLED)
You, get out. Out of our house! (To Sue) What is *he* doing here?

Walt cringes at her presence.

WALT
What'd she say?

SUE
She said welcome to our home.

CONTINUED:

WALT
No she didn't.

SUE
No, she didn't.

PHONG (SUBTITLED)
Why is this white man in our home? A man like him brings nothing, nothing but sorrow and death.

Several relatives usher Phong away from Walt. The relatives are embarrassed at the outburst.

WALT
She hates me.

SUE
Yes, she hates you.

WALT
What did I do?

A little Hmong Girl walks past and Walt pats her on the head. Everyone in the room looks in horror at Walt.

WALT (CONT'D)
What?! What the hell are all you fish heads looking at?!

Sue looks around and then pulls Walt out of the room.

SUE
Maybe we should go in the other room.

INT. DINING ROOM - SECONDS LATER.

Sue explains a few facts to Walt.

SUE
A lot of the people in this house are very traditional. Number one, never touch a Hmong person on the head, not even a child. Hmong people believe that the soul resides in the head, so don't do that.

WALT
That's dumb, but fine.

CONTINUED:

SUE
Hmong people also consider looking someone in the eye to be rude. That's why everyone looks away when you look at them.

WALT
Swell. Anything else?

SUE
Yeah, some Hmong smile or grin when they're yelled at or get into a confrontation. It's a cultural thing. It expresses embarrassment or insecurity, not that they're laughing at you.

WALT
Good God, you people are all nuts.

INT. LIVING ROOM.

Walt opens another beer, as Sue speaks Hmong to a relative. Walt notices an Old Hmong Man staring at him.

Walt interrupts Sue.

WALT
Hey Sue.

SUE
What?

WALT
You said you guys don't look you in the eye, but that guy keeps staring at me.

Sue laughs and gestures to the Old Hmong Man. The Old Hmong Man steps over and nods to Walt.

SUE
This is Kor Khue. He's the Lor family shaman.

WALT
Witch doctor?

Sue smiles and nods.

SUE
Something like that. The Hmong hold their clan Shaman in very high regards.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALT
Boo-ga, boo-ga.

Kor Khue says something to Sue in Hmong. Sue turns and translates to Walt.

SUE
Kor Khue is interested in you, he heard what you did. He says he would like to read you.

WALT
Huh?

SUE
He wants to read you. Tell you your soul. It'd be rude not to allow him this, it's a great honor.

WALT
Tell Kor to be my guest, fire away.

Sue speaks Hmong to the Shaman. The Shaman responds and sits down across from Walt. He looks at Walt for a long time.

Walt stares straight back at him. The Shaman mumbles to himself.

Finally the Shaman turns to Sue and speaks very rapidly. As Sue translates, the Shaman watches Walt's reaction.

SUE
Kor Khue says that you think you've been disrespected. You do not live your life. Your food has no flavor. You are scared of your past. You stopped living years and years ago. Kor Khue says you're not at peace.

Walt looks like he's been hit by a truck. The Shaman watches Walt closely, he knows he hit the nail on the head.

Walt looks pale. He's been spooked good. He wipes sweat from his forehead.

WALT
Excuse me.

Walt gets up and steps into the kitchen. He takes several deep breaths. He's pretty shook up.

WALT
Je - zuz - Christ.

CONTINUED:

Walt looks around at all the Hmongs eating and carrying on.

Walt sees a young man give up his seat to an Elder.

Walt sees a young woman go to each of the older folks and offer tea and cookies from a tray.

Walt sees a child help an old man out of the bathroom.

Walt coughs hard. He wipes blood from his lips. Sue comes in and looks at Walt.

SUE
Are you okay?

Walt brushes past her and goes into the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - SAME.

EPIPHANY.

Walt washes his face in the sink and dries his hands. He's still pale. He looks long and hard in the mirror.

Walt is stunned, it all adds up. Walt hasn't really lived in 50 years, he hasn't relaxed or exhaled or let his guard down since he got back from Korea in 1953.

WALT (TO HIMSELF)
Son of a bitch. I've got more in common with these goddamned gooks than my own spoiled rotten family.

Walt looks at himself.

WALT (CONT'D)
Happy birthday.

Walt opens the bathroom door. Sue stands there with a concerned look on her face.

SUE
Are you okay?

WALT
Me? I'm fine.

SUE
You were bleeding?

Walt smiles disarmingly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALT
I just bit my tongue. I'm fine. I'm great. Let's get some of that gook food, I'm starving.

INT. KITCHEN.

Walt sits amongst several old Hmong Women, who take great delight in feeding him different Hmong dishes which he's obviously never tasted before.

Walt reacts with great enthusiasm to the food, occasionally making jokes like he's choking, etc. This corny stuff goes over like gangbusters with the Hmong ladies.

Sue comes in and rolls her eyes at Walt.

SUE
Come on you glutton, let's go downstairs.

WALT
Why?

SUE
To mingle.

WALT
I'm fine right here. I'm mingling.

SUE
Come on, you said 'not to leave you alone'.

INT. BASEMENT -SAME.

Walt and Sue descend the stairway. Walt is really out of his element down with all the Hmong teenagers.

And the first person he sees across the room is Tao.

WALT
Oh great.

SUE
Well, look who's over there.

WALT
Whats-his-name who tried to steal my Gran Torino.

CONTINUED:

SUE
My brother Tao.

WALT
Yeah, Toad.

Tao is in the corner, he avoids Walt's gaze. Sue walks over to a group of boys leaving Walt alone.

Walt doesn't know what to do with himself. He leans against the DRYER. The DRYER wobbles.

Walt gets on his hands and knees. He looks under the Dryer. He adjusts the short leg to balance out the machine.

He just can't help it.

All the Hmong kids watch Walt, trying not to laugh at this strange white man on his hands and knees fixing a dryer during a party. Walt looks up - deer in the headlights.

WALT
It was wobbly, but I fixed it. It's fine now, shouldn't wobble anymore.

The Hmong kids look away, covering their mouths with their hands.

Walt glares at Tao, who immediately wipes the smile from his face. Sue walks over and hands Walt a drink.

WALT (CONT'D)
What's this?

SUE
Rice liquor. Try it.

WALT
Alright.

Sue walks off. Walt sips his rice liquor and watches the interaction between the boys and girls.

One particularly gorgeous young willow-wisp of a girl stares across the room at Tao. Tao looks back at her, but then looks away.

The girl keeps looking at Tao, smiling and twisting her hair.

Tao doesn't approach her, but three other young men do. They do their best to charm her. She's polite, but not interested, she keeps looking at Tao.

CONTINUED:

Walt laughs at Tao's ineptitude, shakes his head at this wasted opportunity. Suddenly the girl steps over to Walt.

She smiles -

WA XAM
My friends and I were just wondering, what you're doing here?

WALT
Good question. What *am* I doing here? Anyways, I'm Walt.

WA XAM
Hi, Walt. I'm Wa Xam.

WALT
Wa Yum?

WA XAM
No, Wa Xam. So ... what do you do?

WALT
Me? Not too much ... I fix stuff I guess.

WA XAM
Like what?

WALT
Well, I fixed my wife's friend's sink yesterday. I drove my great aunt to the doctor to straighten out her prescription. Even fixed my screen door before it was broke.

WA XAM
You're funny.

WALT
That's one thing I've never been accused of. A bastard, yes. Funny, no.

Wa Xam laughs.

WA XAM
Well, have fun. I'm going to take off.

WALT
A pleasure to meet you, Yum Yum.

She laughs at Walt butchering her name and goes upstairs. The three young suitors follow her up. Tao watches her.

CONTINUED:

Walt comes over to Tao, who is startled. Walt laughs.

WALT (CONT'D)
Relax zipper head, whatta you think I'm gonna do, shoot you?

Tao looks like he wants to run away.

WALT (CONT'D)
I wouldn't say anything either, if I was you.

Walt sips his rice liquor. Walt can't help but rib Tao.

WALT
You know, I knew you were a dipshit even before the *whole garage deal*, but I have to say you're even worse with women then you are stealing cars, Toad.

TAO
It's Tao.

WALT
What's that?

TAO
It's Tao, not Toad. My name is Tao.

WALT
Good for you. Anyways, you're blowing it with that girl. Not that I give two shits about a Toad like you.

TAO
You don't know what you're talking about.

WALT
Wrong egg roll. I completely know what I'm talking about. I know I'm not always the most pleasant person to be around, but I got the greatest woman who ever lived to marry me. I had to work at it, but I got her and it was the best thing that ever happened to me. Hands down.

Walt points across the room. He sways slightly.

WALT (CONT'D)
But you? You just sit there and watch as Ding Dong and Click Clack and Charlie Chan walk away with whats-her-face. She likes you, you know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAO
Who?

WALT
She was standing over there, orange dress, twisting her hair and smiling at you.

TAO
You mean, Wa Xam?

Walt takes a long swig off his drink and nods.

WALT
Yeah, yeah. Anyways, she likes you, I know, I talked to her. Great girl, charming girl. Love her. I love Yum Yum. But you? You just watch her walk out the door with the Three Stooges. Why? Because you're a big fat pussy!

Walt drains his drink.

WALT (CONT'D)
I gotta go home. Good luck, puss-cake. You need it.

EXT. WALT'S YARD - DAY.

Walt empties the lawnmower bag as two elderly Hmong Woman come over each carrying a FLOWER BOUQUET.

WALT
No. No thanks. No more flowers.

The elderly Hmong Women nod and speak rapid sentences in Hmong to Walt. He has no idea what they are saying.

WALT (CONT'D)
No more. Please, keep your flowers.

The Hmong women nod, smile and chatter away, ignoring Walt. They walk past him and set the BOUQUETS on his porch.

WALT (DEFEATED)
Okay, just put them on the porch. But that's it. No more.

INT. WALT'S ENTRY WAY - MORNING.

The doorbell rings. Walt answers, a Skillsaw in one hand.

Standing on his doorstep are three Hmong women.

WALT
What now, Gee?

Gee holds up a plate covered with tinfoil.

WALT (CONT'D)
No. Forget it. Stop bringing me stuff.

Gee scolds Walt in Hmong.

WALT (CONT'D)
No. I've had it.

Gee opens the corner of the tinfoil. Walt looks at the food.

WALT (CONT'D)
I can't. You have to stop.

Gee pulls the tinfoil off. Walt gazes at the food.

WALT (CONT'D)
Is this that chicken dumpling thing you brought the other day?

EXT. WALT'S HOUSE - EVENING.

Walt pulls up in his pick-up truck. Sue and Vu wait on Walt's porch. Tao stand out on the sidewalk.

Walt gets out of his pick-up.

WALT
What now? What?

Vu rambles on in Hmong. Walt looks at his watch. He looks at Sue for the translation.

SUE
Tao is here to make amends, he's here to work for you.

WALT
No he's not.

CONTINUED:

SUE
mother says that Tao dishonored the family and now he has to work off his debt. He'll start tomorrow morning.

WALT
No. The kid is useless, I don't even want him on my property. I thought we already went over that.

SUE
It's very important to my mother that you accept. It'd be an insult to refuse.

WALT
How is this all of a suddenly turned around on me? The goddamned kid tries to steal my car and somehow I'm the bad guy if I don't accept?

SUE
My family is very traditional and it will very much upset them if you don't let Tao repay...

Tao interrupts from the sidewalk...

TAO
Come on, Sue. If he doesn't want to, let's just go.

Sue and Vu yell at Tao to shut up at the same time; Sue in English, Vu in Hmong.

SUE/VU
Shut up. - Shut up! - Shut up!!

Tao looks at the ground.

A PAUSE. Walt sees at the earnest looks on the Hmong women's faces. Their expression 'begs' Walt.

Walt gazes back at Tao. Walt looks disgusted, he exhales loudly...

WALT
Fine. Great. Tomorrow.

Walt walks past them and into his house.

WALT
Jesus, Joseph and Mary. These Hmong broads are like badgers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EXT. WALT'S PORCH - NEXT MORNING.

Walt sits drinking coffee and reading the newspaper. Tao walks sheepishly over to the property line.

WALT
Son of a bitch, I didn't think he'd show.

Walt waves Tao over. Tao barely looks at Walt.

WALT
Okay. What are you good at?

TAO
Like what?

WALT
That's what I'm asking. What are you good at? If you're gonna work for me, I have to know what you can do.

TAO
I don't know.

WALT
That's about what I expected. Okay, why don't you go over by the spruce tree and count how many birds feed at the bird feeder.

TAO
Count the birds?

WALT
Yeah, you *can* count? You slopes are supposed to be good at math, right?

TAO
Yes, I can count.

INT. WALT'S GARDEN - MORNING.

Tao stands in Walt's garden with his arms folded. Walt walks over to trim weeds around the garden fence.

Walt doesn't even look at Tao. Finally...

TAO
You want *me* to do that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALT
No.

TAO
Why not?

WALT
I want it done right, that's why.

TAO
But you've got me just standing here. What am I supposed to be doing, anyway?

WALT
Scaring away crows.

Tao shoots Walt a dirty look.

WALT (CONT'D)
It's a perfect job for you, plus you people don't seem to mind squinting in the sun all day.

EXT. WALT'S HOUSE - MORNING.

Walt waters a flower bed. Tao comes over and stands there. Walt finishes watering before even looking at Tao.

TAO
What do you have for me today? You want me to watch paint dry or maybe count the clouds that pass by?

WALT
Don't get flip with me, zipper head. I ain't the one who tried to steal and don't forget it.

TAO
Go ahead. I don't care if you insult me and say racist things. I'll take it.

WALT
That I know. You have no teeth, kid. That's your problem. You have no balls.

TAO
Look, I'm stuck here. Why don't you give me something useful to do.

CONTINUED:

WALT
Because unlike you I'm not useless. I maintain my property, whereas you swamp rats let your houses go to hell.

Walt looks across the street at one very dilapidated house.

WALT
Wait a minute. ... How long do I have you for?

Tao pauses ... he doesn't want to answer.

WALT
How long, Toad?

TAO
(Quietly) Till next Friday.

Walt laughs out loud. It makes Tao cringe.

WALT
Go get my ladder out of the garage.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE - SAME DAY.

Tao is at the top of the LADDER. Walt and the Hmong neighbor grin at him from the bottom.

WALT
When you're done caulking the siding, nail that gutter back up, I can see it right out my kitchen window, it's been bugging me for three years.

The neighbor says something in Hmong to Walt.

WALT
You said it, brother.

EXT. HOUSE ACROSS THE STREET - RAINY MORNING.

Tao digs up a big TREE STUMP out in the rain. It's hard, draining labor and Tao is covered with mud.

Tao's shovel hits rocks and roots and clay. Misery.

EXT. NEIGHBORING HOUSES - DAY.

We see Tao do various chores; scrape paint, hang screen doors, reattach house numbers, trim bushes, etc.

Walt scrutinizes his every move. Tao is a virtual slave.

EXT. WALT'S PORCH - MORNING.

Walt watches with great satisfaction as Tao paints one of the neighboring houses. The neighborhood is really shaping up.

Walt sips his coffee with a slight grin. He is really, really, really enjoying this.

A very old Hmong man and his very young grandson walk up Walt's driveway. The grandson translates for grandpa.

GRANDSON
Grandpa says he want to know if you can have Tao clear out the big wasp nest under our porch?

Walt reaches in his pocket and studies a small note pad.

WALT
I don't see why not. (Grins) Tell him sometime after lunch.

EXT. WALT'S HOUSE - MORNING.

Tao walks up the sidewalk. Before ringing the doorbell, Tao looks down at his hands which have several CALLOUSES on them.

Tao rubs his hands with a smile. This has been the first time Tao has really risen to a task presented to him.

Tao reaches for the doorbell...

INT. WALT'S BATHROOM - SAME.

Walt stands over the sink, coughing. In the background the doorbell rings.

Walt coughs up a big spot of blood, it's thick with fibers. The doorbell rings again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Walt wipes his mouth and runs the water in the sink.

INT. WALT'S ENTRY WAY - SECONDS LATER.

Walt answers the door, just as Tao rings the doorbell a third time. Walt looks angry.

WALT
Jesus lord almighty, knock it off.

TAO
It's my last day, whatta you want me to do?

WALT
Take the day off, you've done enough.

Tao looks disappointed, but says nothing. He nods and starts to walk away. Walt calls after him...

WALT
Toad.

Tao turns around. Walt wants to say something, but stops.

WALT (CONT'D)
Nothing, nevermind.

Walt shuts the door.

INT. DOCTOR'S WAITING ROOM.

Walt sits in the crowded waiting room. He looks around. He's the only WHITE PERSON in the room. Even most of the STAFF is African or from India.

As Walt waits, names are called out such as Alvarez, Ngaima, Yang and Abdalla.

Finally when the name 'Kowalski' is called, the Muslim woman can't pronounce it correctly. Walt winces.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE.

Walt sits in a chair, his hands folded in his lap.

A short Asian man in a doctor's smock comes in with a chart.

CONTINUED:

ASIAN DOCTOR
Mr. Kowalski?

WALT
That's right.

ASIAN DOCTOR
Good afternoon. I looked over your paper work and I think we should immediately start on a full battery of tests. I feel that this...

WALT
Wait a minute. Where's my regular doctor, where's Dr. Goldstein?

ASIAN DOCTOR
Dr. Goldstein retired three years ago. I'm his replacement, Dr. Chang.

WALT
Jesus Christ.

INT. MITCH'S KITCHEN.

Mitch, Karen and Ashley are in the kitchen. The phone rings and Ashley looks at the Caller ID.

ASHLEY
It's Grandpa Walt.

KAREN
Well, pick it up.

ASHLEY
You talk to him.

KAREN
Mitch?

MITCH
I'm doing bills here.

KAREN
He's *your* Father.

Ashley hands him the phone and he pushes the TALK button.

MITCH
Hello, Dad.

CONTINUED:

WALT (O.S.)
Hello? It's me ... Dad.

MITCH
I know. What's up?

The CAMERA intercuts between Mitch in his huge kitchen and Walt sitting on the edge of his bed.

WALT
Um ... not much, how about you?

MITCH
I'm fine, fine.

WALT
Fine. That's fine. ... How about the kids and Karen?

MITCH
Everyone is fine.

WALT
Good.

There is a long, uncomfortable pause. Walt looks at some Xeroxed medical pamphlets scattered on his bed.

MITCH
Good.

WALT
Well, that's good. ... How's ... work?

MITCH
Busy.

WALT
Right. I spose.

MITCH
Speaking of busy, I have a lot on my plate right now, unless there's something pressing.

Walt looks at a pale, blue pamphlet. Mitch looks at his housekeeping bill.

WALT
No. Nope.

Another pause.

CONTINUED:

WALT
Okay then.

MITCH
Okay. Yeah, so it's not a good time right now. Why don't you call me over the weekend.

WALT
Sure.

MITCH
Okay, it was nice talking to you, bye Dad.

Walt hangs up. He lies down on his bed.

EXT. WALT'S FRONT YARD - DAY.

While Walt fills a bird feeder, he notices Tao next door.

Tao stands, tiptoed on the top of a six foot ladder, trying to cut a high branch with a pole saw.

Walt shakes his head and walks over to Tao.

WALT
Hey moron.

Tao is startled and almost falls off the ladder.

TAO
What?

WALT
I appreciate you're doing something on your own, but you're the only person I know dumb enough to get himself killed trimming tree branches.

TAO
What now?

WALT
You don't stand on the top step of a ladder *and* if you cut through that branch your hacking away at, you'll end up kaput.

Tao looks and sure enough - a thick, black POWER LINE is five feet below the branch he's almost severed.

CONTINUED:

WALT (CONT'D)
Go grab the extension ladder from my garage and I'll show you how to do it right, zipper head.

CUT TO:

EXT. TAO'S YARD - LATER.

Tao ties up bundles of branches and twigs. Walt lights a cigarette, looks up in the tree and nods.

WALT
Looks good. Good job.

Tao nods.

WALT (CONT'D)
Make sure you put the ladder back when you're done raking up the leaves.

TAO
I know. I will.

Walt walks back over to his porch, grabs a Pabst from the cooler and watches Tao rake.

A white Honda turns the corner and drives slowly past Tao.

Smokie and Spider smile menacingly at Tao as they pass.

WALT
This kid doesn't have a chance.

The Honda now slowly passes Walt's house. Walt just stands there, sipping his beer.

The Honda slows to a stop and the gangbangers glare at Walt.

The REAR WINDOW of the Honda opens.

Walt holds out his RIGHT HAND like a GUN. He closes one eye to better 'aim' his imaginary gun and moves his thumb several times as if firing. Bang - bang - bang.

The Honda takes off. Walt watches it drive off and lights another cigarette.

Walt doesn't notice, but Tao witnessed this whole interaction from his yard.

INT. WALT'S ENTRY WAY - MORNING.

The doorbell rings.

Walt opens his door. Tao stands there with his hands in his pockets. He's a bit apprehensive.

TAO
What do you know about faucets?

Walt stares at him for a second and then laughs.

CUT TO:

INT. TAO'S KITCHEN - A MINUTE LATER.

Tao looks on as Walt turns the faucet on and off, it drips water at its base. Walt looks under the sink.

WALT
For the love of Pete.

TAO
What?

WALT
It must be a hundred degrees in here, turn on the fan.

Tao flips the switch on the CEILING FAN, the fan wobbles and shakes, it looks like it's about to fly off.

Walt stares up at the fan and shakes his head.

INT. WALT'S GARAGE.

The CEILING FAN and FAUCET are taken apart on the workbench. Walt reinstalls the diverter valve. Tao looks at all of Walt's tools.

TAO
Man, where did you get all this stuff?

WALT
What are you talking about?

TAO
All the tools and stuff.

CONTINUED:

WALT
Where the hell do you think I got them Toad? This may come as a shock to a thief, but I actually *bought* the things I have with money I earned.

TAO
Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's not what I meant. There's just so much shit packed in here.

WALT
You need the right tool for the right job. Every single thing here has a purpose.

TAO
Okay, what's this?

Tao points to a tool.

WALT
Post hole digger.

Tao starts pointing at things on the workbench in quick succession, questioning Walt with his expression.

WALT
Hand spade. Tin snips. Nail punch. Tack hammer. Putty knife. Wire stripper. Drywall saw. Tile spacers.

Silence. Walt can see something is bothering Tao, but he's too uncomfortable to speak up -

WALT
What?

TAO
I can't afford to buy *all* this stuff.

WALT
I didn't buy all this stuff at once, blockhead. I've lived here for fifty years. A man stays in one place long enough he tends to attract a decent set of tools.

TAO
Yeah, but...

CONTINUED:

WALT
Look kid, I *think* I know where you're going with this. You don't need *everything* to maintain a house. I'm going to let you in on a little secret.

Walt rattles around his tool bench and slaps down THREE items in quick succession.

WALT
This is for you. Roll of duct tape, can of WD-40 and a pair of vice-grips. Any man who's worth a shit can do half his household jobs with these three things. In the odd chance that doesn't work out, you can borrow something.

TAO
Okay. Cool.

Walt coughs and covers his mouth. Both Tao and Walt see the spot of BLOOD in his hand.

TAO
What's with that?

WALT
What's with what?

TAO
The blood you just coughed up. That's not good, you should see a doctor.

Walt quickly changes the subject - while tightening the screws that hold the fan blade to the motor hub.

WALT
So ... what exactly was the deal with those guys out on my lawn that night? Who are they?

TAO
A gang. Hmong gangbangers.

WALT
I gathered that. What did they want with you?

TAO
They wanted to take me away because I blew my first initiation.

CONTINUED:

WALT
You joined up with those pukes? Damn, you are a pussy. Why in the hell did you do that?

TAO
I don't know. They were persuasive. My cousins in the gang. They just talked me into it I guess.

WALT
Well, at least your honest about it.

A LONG SILENCE. Walt finishes fixing the ceiling fan.

WALT
So how'd you blow your first initiation?

Tao nods towards the GRAN TORINO.

WALT
The Gran Torino?

Tao nods. Walt laughs.

WALT
Christ all Friday.

INT. WALT'S BASEMENT.

Walt straps an old WESTINGHOUSE FREEZER onto a two-wheeled DOLLY. Walt attempts to pull the freezer upstairs.

Walt strains with the heavy appliance. It's too much weight for Walt, but this doesn't stop him from heaving and pulling.

Walt could have done this by himself when he was younger. Walt sits down on the step and breathes hard.

INT. MITCH'S MASSIVE DEN.

Mitch watches afternoon baseball, drinking an imported, bottled beer. KAREN pokes her head into the room.

KAREN
See you later, I'm taking the kids to the mall.

Mitch never looks up from the TV.

CONTINUED:

MITCH
Yeah, fine. Just don't spend too much goddamned money.

KAREN
I will.

We hear Karen and the kids exit.

MITCH
Thank God. Finally get the house to myself for once.

The PHONE RINGS. Mitch looks at the Caller ID It says; 'Dad'. Mitch almost doesn't pick it up...

MITCH
Hello.

WALT (V.O.)
Hello? It's me Da ... Walt.

MITCH
Hey Dad. What's up?

The CAMERA intercuts between Walt in his small kitchen and Mitch in his huge den.

WALT
Well ... I .. um ... I'm getting the old Westinghouse up out of the basement.

Mitch mouths the word 'Shit'.

MITCH
Uh huh.

WALT
So ... I got it on the dolly.

MITCH
Yeah, that'll help.

WALT
Yeah. ... And it's a bit heavy ... for one guy.

MITCH
Uh-huh.

WALT
Yeah. ... I need a hand.

MITCH
Oh.

WALT
So are you busy?

MITCH
Does it have to be done right this second? It's been down there for years.

WALT
Well. ... Yeah, I'd like to get on it.

MITCH
Does it work? We were thinking about getting a freezer. What are you going to do with it?

WALT
Giving it to great Aunt Mary.

MITCH
Oh. ... Can't she give you a hand?

WALT
She's eighty-one.

MITCH
I know, I was joking. ... What does *she* need it for?

WALT
To freeze food.

Mitch opens another beer.

MITCH
Yeah, well I'd love to help you out Dad, but I'm just walking out the door. I have to bring the kids to the mall. Sorry.

WALT
Uh-huh.

MITCH
Why don't you call Stevie?

WALT
Your brother lives out of state.

CONTINUED:

MITCH
Well, I don't know what to tell you, I'm on my way out. Keys in my hand.

WALT
Okay then.

MITCH
If you can't find anyone by next week, give me a call.

Walt nods and hangs up.

Mitch hangs up and takes a sip of beer.

MITCH
Great Aunt Mary. Like she needs a freezer.

INT. TAO'S HOUSE.

The doorbell rings and Tao opens the door. There stands Walt. Tao is a little shocked.

WALT
You got a minute, Toad?

CUT TO:

INT. WALT'S BASEMENT - A MINUTE LATER.

Walt and Tao look at the freezer strapped to the dolly.

WALT
I just need a little push. All the weight is up top, so you stay down and give me a little shove at each step.

TAO
Let me take the top.

WALT
Naw, I got it.

TAO
No really, I'll take the top. It looks pretty heavy.

WALT
I'm not crippled. I got it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAO
If you don't let me take the top, I ain't helping. I'll go home.

WALT
Listen zipper head, now's not the time to go and...

TAO
You listen, old man. You came and got me because you needed help, so let me help you. Either it's top or I'm out of here.

Walt studies Tao for a second. Tao doesn't blink, he holds his ground. Walt nods, trying not to grin.

WALT
Okay then, be my guest. Just don't let it slip out of your little girl hands and crush me.

Tao laughs.

TAO
Don't give me any ideas.

EXT. WALT'S BACKYARD - MINUTES LATER.

Tao and Walt ease the freezer down the back steps and pause to take a break. They both breath hard.

TAO
That thing weighs a ton.

WALT
Yeah, but it runs like new. They don't make them like that anymore.

TAO
What are going to do with it?

WALT
Sell it. I haven't used it in years and it was always in the way down there.

TAO
How much?

WALT
Oh, I don't know. Sixty bucks, maybe. Why, you need a freezer?

CONTINUED:

TAO (NODS)
Ours downstairs one died.

Walt thinks for a second.

WALT
Twenty five and it's yours.

TAO
Twenty-five? You just said sixty?

WALT
Save me from wasting money on putting an ad in the paper.

EXT. WALT'S PORCH - DAY.

Walt and Sue sit eating *Laab* as they watch Tao who washes and waxes the Gran Torino in Walt's driveway.

Sue laughs and shakes her head.

SUE
Kind of ironic, huh?

WALT
What?

SUE
What the hell do you think I'm referring to? Toad washing the car he tried to steal from you.

WALT
It seems like justice to me. And if he misses a spot, he's doing it all over.

SUE
It's nice of you to kind of look after him like this. He doesn't have any real role models in his life.

WALT
I ain't a role model.

SUE
You're a good man, Wally. I wish our Dad would have been more like you.

WALT
Don't call me Wally.

CONTINUED:

SUE
No, I'm serious. He was hard on us, really traditional, really old school.

WALT
I'm old school.

SUE
Yeah, but you're American.

WALT
What's that supposed to mean?

Sue shrugs him off. They look at Tao for awhile.

SUE
You like him, don't you?

WALT
Him? Don't be crazy. He tried to steal my car.

SUE
And you spend time with him and you teach him how to fix things and you saved him from that *fuck* cousin of ours and...

WALT
Hey. Watch the language.

SUE
And you're a good man.

WALT
Hand me a beer, Dragon Lady.

Sue hands him a beer and Walt pops the top.

WALT (CONT'D)
So tell me the problem with Hmong boys again. I'm not completely clear.

SUE
Hmong girls slip in and out of the culture more easily. Date who we want, stay close to our mothers, but are able to keep a foot on each side of the fence. The boys fall through the cracks.

WALT
Why?

CONTINUED:

SUE
It's tough. The boys float around. The fathers belong in a totally different world and the boys have no one to turn to. Does that make sense?

WALT
Not sure. No.

SUE
The boys don't ask their fathers for advice, because over here, their father no longer have the answers. Hmong boys become almost invisible, they end up banning together and it all goes to hell from there.

WALT
The girls go to college and the boys go to jail.

SUE
It's more common than not.

Walt reflects on this for awhile, then changes the subject.

WALT
You still going out with that clown?

SUE
No. I dumped him. He was a dim-wit.

Walt nods.

WALT
Good girl.

EXT. WALT'S GARDEN - DAY.

Walt and Tao spread mulch around Walt's vegetable plants.

TAO
You know, the Hmong consider gardening to be women's work.

WALT
Is that why I see you out in your garden all the time? Besides zipper head, we ain't in Hu-Mong.

CONTINUED:

TAO
Funny.

Walt lights a cigarette.

TAO
You should quit those. It's bad for you.

WALT
So is joining a gang, you dipshit.

TAO
Seriously, you should quit, I saw you cough up *blood.*

WALT
So, you ever think about what you want to do with your life?

TAO
I don't know.

WALT
You've *never* thought about it?

TAO
Of course I have.

WALT
Well, while you're thinking about it, try not to stomp all over my chives, you dipshit.

Tao looks down, sure enough he's standing on Walt's chives.

TAO
Sorry.

WALT
Put some mulch around the cucumbers.

Tao spreads more mulch.

TAO
I was thinking about sales, maybe.

WALT
My oldest son's a salesman. He sells cars.

TAO
Does he do well?

CONTINUED:

WALT
License to steal. I worked in a Ford plant for thirty years and my son sells goddamned Japanese cars.

TAO
You made cars?

WALT
That's right. And I put the steering column in the Gran Torino when it rolled down the line in 1972.

TAO
Wow, that's cool.

WALT
It is, isn't it?

TAO
Does your son come over much?

WALT
How are you going about getting into sales? You thinking about school?

TAO
Kinda.

WALT
Well you should.

TAO
School costs money.

WALT
Maybe you should get a job and *save* instead of spreading mulch in my garden.

TAO
Maybe you could just pay me.

WALT
That's funny.

TAO
What kind of job could I get?

WALT
Good question. Who the hell would hire you?

CONTINUED:

TAO
(Deflated) Yeah, I know.

WALT
Aw go on. I'm kidding. You could get a job, easy.

TAO
Like what?

WALT
I'd think about construction.

TAO
Me? Construction? What, do you have Alzheimers or something?

WALT
Naw, you could hack it. You just need a little adjustment.

TAO
You said yourself I'm worthless and I have soft little girl hands.

WALT
That's exactly the point. I know some guys in the trades, but you have to get your shit together. We have to man you up a bit.

TAO
Man me up?

WALT
Yes. *And* you should ask out Yum Yum too.

EXT/INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY.

Walt and Tao walk up to the barber Shop.

WALT
You have to learn how guys talk. Now watch how me and Martin communicate. We just throw it back and forth. You ready?

TAO
Sure.

WALT
Okay, let's go in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Walt holds the door for Tao and they enter. The Barber has his feet up reading a Playboy.

BARBER
Oh great, a Pollack and a chink.

WALT (CONT'D)
Afternoon Martin, you dumb Italian prick.

BARBER
Walt, you cheap asshole, I should have known you'd come in, I *was* having such a pleasant day.

WALT
Why, did you jew some blind man out of a few bucks, give him the wrong change?

Walt and the Barber shake hands warmly. Tao is wide-eyed.

BARBER
Who's the Nip?

WALT
This is Tao. He's a pussy kid who lives next door and I'm trying to man him up a little.

Walt points at Tao.

WALT
Did you see? That's how *men* talk to each other.

TAO
They do?

BARBER
What, do you have shit in your ears?

WALT
Okay. You go out, come back in and give it a try.

TAO
Come on, Walt.

WALT
I said go out there, come back in and talk to the barber like a man. Do it.

Tao shrugs, goes outside, lets the door shut then comes back in. The Barber stands there with a sneer on his face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAO
Wus up, you old Italian prick?

The Barber levels a sawed-off SHOTGUN at Tao.

BARBER
Get outta my shop before I blow your head off you long-haired faggy little gook!

Tao is terrified, frozen stiff.

Walt and the Barber throw their heads back and laugh.

The Barber lowers the shotgun.

WALT
Jesus Christ Toad, you don't walk in and insult a guy. What are you, an idiot?

TAO
But .. but that's what *you* said. That's what you said men say.

WALT
Not if you never met the guy. If you say that shit to the wrong stranger, they'll blow your goddamned gook head off!

Walt and the Barber laugh again.

TAO
What should I have said?

WALT
Anything but that.

BARBER
Kid, you shoulda just started with 'Hi' or 'Hello'.

WALT
Right. You should have said, 'Excuse me, I'm looking for a haircut if you have time'.

BARBER
Yeah. Be polite, but don't kiss ass.

WALT
Or, even better is act like you just got off a construction job. Or bitch about your girlfriend or getting your car fixed.

CONTINUED:

BARBER
Right. *Son of a bitch, I just got my brakes fixed and those sons a bitches really nailed me. Screwed me right in the ass.*

WALT
Exactly. Don't swear at the guy you're talking to, swear about another guy who ain't there. *My son of a bitch prick fucking boss made me work overtime and he knew I had bowling tonight.*

BARBER
Or, *my old lady bitches to me for two fucking hours about how they don't take expired coupons at the grocery store and the minute I turn on the goddamned game, she starts crying how we never talk.*

WALT
See? You come back in, Toad. Be polite and then you bring up something you can both talk about. It ain't rocket science.

TAO
Yeah, but I don't have a job or a car or a girlfriend.

Walt and the Barber laugh.

BARBER
Sweet Jesus, I shoulda blown his head off when I had the chance.

WALT
Just go back outside and try it again. And don't mention you're a pussy with no car, girl, job, future or whatever. Come in and act like a man, Toad.

Tao goes out, turns around and comes back in.

TAO
Excuse me sir, I need a haircut, if you ain't too busy ... you Italian son-of-a-bitch, prick barber.

Walt and the Barber laugh...

CONTINUED:

TAO (CONT'D)
Boy does my ass hurt from all the guys at my construction job.

Walt and the Barber laugh harder.

INT. WALT'S OLD PICK-UP TRUCK - MORNING.

WALT
If you do this, you're going to follow through, right?

TAO
Yeah, yeah.

WALT
No, not *yeah, yeah*. Yes, as in *yes sir* I'll do my best.

TAO
Yes, I'll do my best.

WALT
You better, because when I vouch for someone, it's my word and I don't want *anyone* making me look bad.

TAO
No, I'm good. I'm totally into this.

WALT
And don't lay down to people all the time. Always look a person in the eye. When you shake a man's hand, you can usually tell where you stand with him.

Walt hands a pair of beat-up WORK GLOVES to Tao.

WALT
Here, stuff these in your back pocket.

TAO
Cool.

WALT
Just don't blow this.

Walt and Tao walk up to the Superintendents Office Trailer on a construction job site.

INT. JOB TRAILER - SAME.

Walt and Tao come in. Walt shakes hands with TIM KENNEDY, the job super.

WALT
Kennedy, you drunken Irish goon, how the hell are ya?

KENNEDY
Shitty, but who's gonna listen?

WALT
Not me.

Walt pours himself a cup of the bad job-site coffee.

KENNEDY
Help yourself, Walt you dumb Pollack.

WALT
I already did. This is the kid I told you about. Tao, this is Tim Kennedy, he's the super on the job.

Kennedy looks Tao up and down. Tao looks him in the eye.

KENNEDY
What do we got, Walt?

WALT
He's done construction here and there. Whatever you need, he'll pick it up quick.

KENNEDY
You sure?

WALT
Sure.

KENNEDY
You speak English?

TAO
Yes sir.

KENNEDY
You born here?

TAO
You bet.

CONTINUED:

KENNEDY
You got a vehicle? I see Walt drove you here.

TAO
Not at the moment. I'm taking the bus for now.

KENNEDY
The bus? Jesus Christ, you don't have a car?

TAO
My headgasket cracked and the goddamned prick at the shop wants to bend me over for $2100.

KENNEDY
I just replaced the tranny in my Tahoe and the sons a bitches fucked me hard, just under $3200.

TAO
goddamned thieves. It ain't right.

KENNEDY
You got that right. Come on in on Monday and we'll find something for you to do.

Tao puts out his hand to shake.

TAO
Thanks Mr. Kennedy.

Tim Kennedy shakes Tao's hand.

KENNEDY
It's Tim. What's your name again?

TAO
Tao.

KENNEDY
Okay. You own me one, Walt.

WALT
I'll send you a fucking fruitcake at Christmas.

KENNEDY
Fuck the fruitcake, why don't you hand over the keys to that Gran Torino.

CONTINUED:

WALT
Yeah, everybody seems to want that car.

KENNEDY
I bet.

WALT
You don't know the half of it. Come on, zipper head, let's let this big Mick get back to screwing off.

Walt and Tao exit and walk back to the truck.

INT. TRUCK - DRIVING - SAME MORNING.

Walt pulls into a Home Depot parking lot.

TAO
What are we doing?

WALT
What are you gonna put all your tools in an empty rice bag?

INT. HOME DEPOT.

Walt and Tao walk the aisles. Walt grabs a tool belt and tosses it to Tao.

WALT
You'll need this.

Walt then tosses Tao a utility knife holder.

WALT (CONT'D)
And you'll need that. Now where the hell do they hide the hardware holders?

TAO
I can't afford any of this.

WALT
I'll get it, but you're paying me back with your first check.

TAO
Cool.

Walt pitches a hardware pouch at Tao.

CONTINUED:

WALT
And you need this too. That should about do it.

TAO
Not to bitch, but won't I be needing some tools?

WALT
Tools I got, but I ain't loaning you my tool belt. You can buy tools as you go.

TAO
I appreciate all this.

WALT
Aw, forget it.

TAO
No, I really do. Thank you.

Walt sticks out his jaw and looks Tao straight in the eye. Tao doesn't know what to expect.

A PAUSE. Walt puts out his HAND to Tao. Tao extends his and they SHAKE HANDS.

It's really quite a moment for both of them.

EXT. BUS STOP - AFTERNOON.

Tao gets off the bus, his tool belt over his shoulder. Tao looks tired after working, but content. He walks past an abandoned lot.

The tricked out Honda pulls up and stops. Smokie, Spider and company get out. Tao looks nervous, but remains calm.

TAO
What now?

SPIDER
Just seeing what you're up too, cuz.

TAO
I'm getting home from work, not that you guys would know much about that.

SPIDER
So it's true? You got a job.

CONTINUED:

TAO
Come on, what do you guys want with me?

SMOKIE
Jesus Christ, Tao. What do *you* think? I've been *sooooo* easy on you, but I can't just go on like nothing happened.

TAO
You can't just leave me alone?

SMOKIE
Afraid not.

The gangbangers grab Tao. Tao kicks and struggles as they yank away his tool belt.

TAO
Keep your hands off my stuff.

SMOKIE
Your stuff? You and everything you have is mine. I own you.

Smokie pulls the tape measure off the belt and smashes it against the pavement. Whatever tools Smokie can't destroy, he tosses onto the roof of the closest building.

SMOKIE
You can't just walk away from us, Tao. It looks bad. It makes *me* look bad.

Smokie lights a CIGARETTE and exhales...

SMOKIE (CONT'D)
What's the phrase I'm looking for? Oh yeah, I need to *'save face'*.

Smokie grabs Tao by the neck and presses the lit CIGARETTE into Tao's check.

Tao screams as his flesh burns.

EXT. WALT'S ALLEY - MORNING.

Walt spots Tao as he takes out the trash.

WALT
Hey there.

Tao looks to the ground and heads in the other direction.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAO
Hey, I gotta run.

WALT
Wait a minute. Where have you been, I haven't seen you in days?

TAO
Busy.

Walt squints at Tao. He steps closer. Tao looks away.

Walt tilts Tao's head up, he sees the burn.

WALT
What in the hell happened to you?

TAO
Don't worry about it.

WALT
Don't worry about it? Look at your goddamned face!

TAO
I said don't worry about it. It's not your problem.

Walt looks at the ground and spits.

WALT
When?

TAO
Couple days ago. Grabbed me after I got off the bus coming home from work.

WALT
Cowards.

TAO
I did everything I could possibly do. They broke some of your tools. I'll replace them.

WALT
Forget the tools. Where does your cousin live?

TAO
No Walt, I can manage. I don't want you doing anything.

CONTINUED:

Walt is angry, but eventually nods at Tao.

WALT
Alright. You need any other tools for work?

TAO
I could use a roofing hammer.

WALT
Go in the garage and get whatever you need.

INT. TAO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Tao leans over his desk with a black sharpie marker. He carefully writes 'Tao Vang Lor' in black ink on the face of his smashed up Tape Measure. He puts it back into the tool belt and grabs another tool to label.

INT/EXT. WALT'S TRUCK - NIGHT.

Walt sits in the dark, the only light is from the radio tuned to baseball. Daisy lies in the front seat. Next to Daisy is the M1 RIFLE.

Walt watches as Spider and another Hmong gangbanger step out of the rundown duplex, get in their Honda and drive off.

WALT
That's the last of them.

Walt pulls out his Colt .45 Automatic and chambers a round.

EXT. DUPLEX - SAME.

Walt pounds loudly on the door. A moment later the door starts to swing open and a voice is heard...

SMOKIE O.S.
What the hell did...

Walt kicks open the door and grabs Smokie by the collar.

Walt drags the 105 pound Smokie out of his house and tosses him off the front porch onto the front sidewalk.

CONTINUED:

Smokie is stunned. Walt kicks him hard in the ribs.

SMOKIE
How the fuck did you get here?!

WALT
You aren't that hard to track down.

Walt boots him again. Smokie curls up in the fetal position.

SMOKIE
What do you want?

Walt kicks him a second time.

WALT
I came to give you a chance.

SOMETHING comes out of the shadows under the porch.

Walt swings the barrel of the big Colt .45 at the movement.

It's a cat. Walt puts his pistol away. Smokie exhales.

WALT (CONT'D)
It's just you and me. Nobody knows or has to know I was here. You lay off Tao. Tell your guys he ain't worth it or whatever the hell you want. You don't talk to him, you don't go near him. This is your *one* chance. You lay off and no one will ever be the wiser.

Smokie says nothing.

WALT
I'll take that as a yes. I don't want to come back here. But if I do, believe me, it'll be goddamned ugly.

Walt kicks Smokie again and stalks off into the dark.

EXT. WALT'S HOUSE - SAME EVENING.

Walt pulls up his driveway and parks. Daisy jumps out and Walt carries his rifle into the house. Walt walks stiffly.

Walt gets to the door and drops his keys. When he bends down to pick them up, you can really tell he's sore and hurting.

Walt groans as he goes into inside. He's feeling his age.

CONTINUED:

EXT. WALT'S BACKYARD - DAYS.

Vu, Sue, Tao and Wa Xam all sit in lawn chairs, talking and laughing. Walt flips the inch-thick STEAKS on his Weber.

WALT
How do you want your dog ... I mean *steaks* cooked? Medium, medium well?

TAO
Funny.

Walt pops open a beer and grabs an appetizer that Vu made.

WALT
Is this *Hmoog* or *Laab?*

SUE
Laab.

WALT
Isn't it usually a little spicier?

Tao, Wa Xam and Sue laugh.

SUE
Oh whatever, Wally.

WALT
It does. Usually it's got more *zing*.

SUE
Jesus Christ, look at you. I've never seen you like this.

WALT
What?

SUE
Look at you smile, old man. Kicking back, having a good old time. You're sure pleased with yourself today.

TAO
And it's a little unnerving if you ask me.

WALT
Aw, go on.

CONTINUED:

SUE
No, admit it. You are. You're feeling pretty good, aren't you?

WALT
Well, who wouldn't? I'm surrounded by beautiful women, it's a beautiful day. Great food, good friends. Hell, even Toad isn't driving me nuts for once.

TAO
It never ends.

WALT
I'm just kidding. Let me tell you something, Yum-Yum. If Tao doesn't ask you out soon, I will.

SUE
Don't listen to him Wa Xam. He's a white devil.

WA XAM (LAUGHS)
I'd love to Walt, but he beat you to it.

WALT
I'll be damned. Movie? Dinner?

Wa Xam and Tao nod. They're a bit embarrassed.

SUE
Yeah, they're taking the bus.

WALT
The bus?! That's no good. A charming young lady like this deserves to go in style.

TAO
Like what? Take a limo?

Walt nods towards the GRAN TORINO.

TAO (CONT'D)
The Gran Torino? You'd let me drive it?

WALT
Sure. Why not.

TAO
Really?

Walt smiles.

CONTINUED:

WALT
Really.

They shake hands.

INT. WALT'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING.

Walt watches baseball. He hears a car outside. Shouts are heard and glass breaks.

Walt gets up and looks out the shades...

TAO'S HOUSE is raked with GUNFIRE coming from a VAN! Windows shatter and the siding splinters.

FIFTY BULLETS shake the house before the VAN peels off.

EXT. TAO'S HOUSE - SAME.

Walt is up their front steps and in the house in seconds. Walt goes from room to room, from Vu to Phong finally to Tao - making sure no ones been hit.

WALT
Is everyone okay? Is anyone hit? Sue? Vu? Tao, where's Tao?

Tao sits up from behind the couch. Blood pours down his neck. He's stunned.

WALT
Oh no.

Walt lays Tao down and rips open the collar of his shirt. Walt probes around Tao's neck.

TAO
What .. what is it?

WALT
Hang on ... you're just cut, is all.

TAO
Is everybody else okay?

WALT
Yeah.

CONTINUED:

Walt looks around at the BULLET HOLES in the walls. Tao follows his gaze.

TAO
It's a miracle no one was killed.

WALT
They aimed high.

Sure enough - most of the bullet holes are above head level on the walls.

WALT
Where's Sue?

TAO
She went to our aunts'.

WALT
Call her.

TAO
What?

WALT
I said call her. Get the goddamned phone and call and see if she's there.

Tao scrambles for the phone and dials.

Tao speaks Hmong to whoever answered. Tao starts to speak faster. He looks at Walt and shakes his head 'no'.

For once - Vu and Phong understand what Walt was talking about. There is anguish on every face in the room.

CUT TO:

INT. TAO'S HOUSE - LATER.

Walt sits across from Tao, drinking rice liquor. Walt speaks loudly, without any consideration for Phong who shoots him dirty looks.

WALT
This is exactly what I didn't want. Damn gooks. Why the hell am I even here?

TAO
Maybe one of her friends called and she just changed plans.

Walt sips the Rice Liquor. Walt now speaks quietly to Tao.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALT
In Korea I learned not to care. The best friends of my life are still missing somewhere in Korea. You harden yourself. Don't let anything get to you.

Phong looks out the window and screams. She runs over and swings open the door.

Everyone expects the worse...

And it comes like a cold wind - SUE WALKS IN LIKE A ZOMBIE. She has been brutally beaten. Her clothes are dirty and torn.

BLOOD runs down SUE'S legs from under her skirt.

Walt looks at her and the glass falls from his hand.

Sue staggers into Vu's arms. Vu weeps. Sue hugs her mother and sobs.

Tao reaches to hug his sister, but Phong screeches at him, pointing at Walt and back to Tao.

Walt is destroyed. He steps outside into the dark.

EXT/INT. WALT'S HOUSE - SAME.

Walt staggers across the yard to his house.

WALT
No, no, no, no, no.

Walt bursts in the door, throws himself in an easy chair and CRIES. He tries to stop and cries harder.

It's the first time Walt has cried in fifty years. He wails, crying for Tao, Sue, his wife, kids and himself.

He lets it all out. Daisy jumps in his lap and he hugs his old dog as he bawls.

CUT TO:

INT. WALT'S LIVING ROOM - LATER.

Walt sits, red-eyed. He's done crying. Family photo albums are scattered around.

Father Janovich knocks and eases open the front door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FATHER JANOVICH
Mr. Kowalski, are you in here?

WALT
Come on in.

Father Janovich comes in and sits down across from Walt.

FATHER JANOVICH
Are you okay?

Walt nods.

FATHER JANOVICH (CONT'D)
The police finally left. No one is talking. One thing about the Hmong, they keep their mouths shut.

WALT
I've noticed that.

Father Janovich picks up a photo album and flips through it. Pictures of Mitch and Steve as babies.

WALT
You know, there's no way that Tao *or* Sue are gonna have any peace if these gang guys don't go away. Go away forever. You know it as well as I do.

FATHER JANOVICH
What are you saying?

WALT
You heard what I said.

FATHER JANOVICH
They took Sue to the hospital. She's scared. They're all scared.

WALT
I'm not.

FATHER JANOVICH
I know that. Believe me, they all know that. Tao especially. He's sitting out there staring at your front door. You *know* what he expects, Mr. Kowalski.

WALT
Yeah, well what would you do if you were me? If you were Tao? What would you do?

CONTINUED:

Father Janovich shakes his head.

FATHER JANOVICH
I know what I'd do if I was you, or at least what you think you should do. If I was Tao I guess I'd want vengeance. I'd want to stand shoulder to shoulder with you and kill those guys.

WALT
And you?

FATHER JANOVICH
What would I do? I'd come over here and talk to you I guess. I know you're close with these people, but this pisses me off too, Mr. Kowalski.

Walt nods.

WALT
Wanna beer?

FATHER JANOVICH
I'd love one.

WALT
They're in the cooler, grab me one too.

Father Janovich grabs *four* beers, two for each of them. He opens a Pabst and takes a big swig.

FATHER JANOVICH
Damn all this. It just isn't fair.

WALT
Nothing's fair, Father.

Father Janovich and Walt sit for awhile.

FATHER JANOVICH
So, what are you going to do, Mr. Kowalski.

WALT
Call me Walt.

Father Janovich nods.

FATHER JANOVICH
Alright, what are you going to do, Walt?

CONTINUED:

WALT
Not sure yet. All I do know is they don't have a goddamned chance.

INT. WALT'S KITCHEN - MORNING.

Walt sits at the kitchen table in his robe, drinking coffee. Tao comes in without even knocking on the door.

TAO
What are you doing?

WALT
I'm thinking.

TAO
Thinking time is over. Now it's time to knock the ass out of those pricks.

WALT
I know you don't want to hear this, but you have to calm down.

TAO
What?!

WALT
You have to have a clear head, otherwise mistakes get made. Back away from what's happened, Tao.

TAO
No. Don't let me down, Walt. Not you. This is going to end, today.

Walt stands up and pulls out a chair for Tao to sit in.

WALT
Sit down.

TAO
I don't want to sit.

WALT
I SAID SIT DOWN! Just listen up for a second and don't say anything.

Tao sits down. Walt rubs his hands together.

CONTINUED:

WALT
I know what needs to be done. I need to prepare, this needs to be carefully planned. You know I'm the right man for this. So cool down for a little while and meet me back here at 4pm. I promise you, what needs to be done, *will be done*.

TAO
I say we go now. Right now.

WALT
And do what? You want to go kill your cousin and those other Zips. Mr. Tough-Guy-All-Of-A-Sudden is out for blood. What do you even know about it?

Tao is furious, but says nothing.

WALT
Trust me, Tao. Cool down and we'll meet back here at four. Okay?

Tao doesn't answer.

WALT (CONT'D)
I said 'okay'? You won't do anything without me. You meet me back here at four? Say 'okay'.

TAO
Okay.

Tao storms out the back door. Walt pours more coffee.

INT. BATHROOM.

Walt soaks in the tub. It's filled with bubbles. Walt looks over at Daisy who rests on a towel in the corner.

Walt lights a CIGARETTE and exhales. Daisy curls up her lips at the smoke.

WALT
I know, I know. Give me a break, it's the first time I've ever smoked in the house.

EXT. WALT'S YARD - DAY.

Walt meticulously mows his lawn. He carefully trims around the fence and birdbath.

INT. OLD SCHOOL BARBER SHOP.

Martin finishes cutting Walt's hair.

BARBER
There, all done. Ten bucks American.

WALT
I don't suppose you still have steady enough hands to give a guy a *straight shave*, you withered, old Italian mummy?

BARBER
You? A straight shave? You've never ordered a straight shave, ever.

WALT
That's right. I always wondered what they were like. Unless you're too goddamned busy?

BARBER
No, no. That's fine. Let me heat up a towel.

Walt hands Martin the Barber a twenty.

WALT
Here's twenty. Keep the change in case you slip and hit my jugular.

INT. OLD SCHOOL MEN'S CLOTHING STORE.

Walt gets fitted for a new suit. The OLD TAILOR carefully measures Walt's shoulders.

WALT
So you can take it in right here?

TAILOR
Yes sir. Take about an hour.

WALT
That's great. Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAILOR
Yes sir.

WALT
Never had a fitted suit.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH OFFICE.

Walt comes in and Father Janovich looks up.

FATHER JANOVICH
Mr. Kowalski, what can I do for you?

WALT
I've come for confession.

FATHER JANOVICH
Oh Lord Jesus, what have you done?

WALT
Nothing. Take it easy.

FATHER JANOVICH
What are you up to?

WALT
Are you going to let me confess or not?

CUT TO:

INT. CONFESSIONAL BOOTH.

Walt calmly sits on one side and a very nervous, sweating Father Janovich sits on the other.

FATHER JANOVICH
How long has it been since your last confession?

WALT
Forever. Bless me Father, for I have sinned.

FATHER JANOVICH
What are your sins, my son.

WALT
In 1968, I kissed Betty Jablonski at the work Christmas party. Dorothy was talking with the other wives and it just happened.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FATHER JANOVICH
Yes. Go on.

WALT
I made nine hundred dollars profit selling a boat and motor and never reported the taxes which is the same as stealing.

FATHER JANOVICH
Yes. Fine.

WALT
And lastly, I was never close to my two sons. I don't know them. I didn't know how.

FATHER JANOVICH
That's it?

WALT
Whatta you mean, '*That's it*'? It's bothered me for years.

FATHER JANOVICH
God loves and Forgives you. Say ten 'Hail Mary's' and five 'Our Fathers'. Are you going to retaliate for what happened to Sue?

Walt says nothing. Father Janovich looks hard at Walt.

FATHER JANOVICH
I'm going over to that house today, Mr. Kowalski.

WALT
Is that so?

FATHER JANOVICH
It is. And every other day until you see the folly in what you are planning.

WALT
I gotta go, Padre. Busy day ahead.

FATHER JANOVICH
Go in peace.

WALT
I am at peace.

Walt and Father Janovich shake hands. Walt exits.

CONTINUED:

Father Janovich exhales loudly and drops into his chair.

FATHER JANOVICH
Je - zuz - Christ.

INT. WALT'S KITCHEN - 3:51 PM.

Walt carefully reassembles the two weapons he just cleaned and oiled. Tao comes in and looks down at the two weapons -

The 30-06. M1 GARAND RIFLE and the COLT .45 PISTOL.

Tao picks up the heavy RIFLE.

TAO
Which one do I get?

WALT
You ever fire a weapon?

TAO
No.

Tao aims the rifle at an imaginary target.

WALT
Put that down. I got something for you.

TAO
What?

WALT
In Korea, October, 1952. We were sent up to sweep a Chink machine gun nest that had carved us up pretty bad. I was the only one who came back. ... I received the Silver Star. I want you to have it.

TAO
Why?

WALT
When we went up that hill, we knew it was ten to one against us, but we went anyway. This trouble now, it's similar. We're walking right into it. We might not be coming home tonight.

TAO
The hell we won't. We're going to roll in there and tear ass.

CONTINUED:

WALT
Don't be a fool, these guys are waiting for that exact reaction.

Tao is quiet for a minute.

TAO
How many?

WALT
How many what?

TAO
How many men did you kill in Korea?

WALT
Thirteen for sure. Probably more.

TAO
What was it like to kill a man?

WALT
You don't want to know.

TAO
Why not?

WALT
Go get the Silver Star. It's in a blue wooden box in the cellar.

Tao goes downstairs. He turns on the light and goes into the cellar. Tao locates a BLUE WOODEN BOX and opens it.

Tao holds up the MEDAL. He looks at it closely.

AND WHAM - Walt slams the heavy cellar DOOR shut behind him. Walt slides the BOLT LOCK into place with a loud CLICK.

Tao couldn't kick his way out of there in ten years. Of course he tries anyway. Tao is furious. He throws things.

TAO
What the hell are you doing?! Let me out of here, you goddamned son-of-a-bitch!!

WALT
Quick smashing everything. You'll never get out of there, so just relax.

TAO
You let me out you crazy old fuck or I will *kill you* when I get out of here.

CONTINUED:

Tao pounds on the door. Walt pounds back with a strength and authority which startles Tao.

WALT
You want to know how does it feels to kill a man? It feels goddamned lousy. And it feels even worse when you get a medal for bravery right after you mowed down some scared kid when he tries to give up. A dumb, scared, little gook, just about your age. I shot him with the same rifle you just held upstairs. I've thought about that kid for fifty years. And I promise you boy, you want no part of it. Me, I've got blood on my hands. I'm soiled. Forgive me for tricking you like a dope. I'll call someone and have them let you out later.

TAO
No! Let me out!!

Tao pounds on the door.

WALT (CONT'D)
You've come a long way. I'm proud to call you a friend. You have your whole life ahead of you, whereas *this* is what I do. I finish things. You'd just get in the way. Sorry.

Walt goes back upstairs leaving Tao locked up in his cellar.

Tao howls to be let out.

EXT. WALT'S HOUSE - DAY.

Walt walks out his front door with Daisy on her leash. He walks over to Tao's house.

Phong sits in a lawnchair and glares at Walt. She yells in Hmong as Walt walks straight up to her.

WALT
Aw, pipe down you hag.

PHONG(SUBTITLED)
You're an evil man. I've seen your kind before.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

PHONG(SUBTITLED) (CONT'D)
Back home, white soldiers came to our villages and filled our young men's minds with ideas of glory. Then you'd lead them away to their deaths.

Walt of course has no idea what she said.

WALT
Fine, *I hate you too.*

Walt holds out the DOG LEASH to Phong. She looks down at Daisy and back at Walt. She lashes out again in Hmong.

WALT
I need you to watch my dog.

Walt holds the leash closer. Phong folds her arms in defiance. Walt exhales loudly.

Walt lifts up one of the LEGS OF HER LAWNCHAIR and slips the loop of the leash underneath it so Daisy can't follow him.

WALT
Her name is Daisy.

Walt bends down on one knee and lovingly pets Daisy. He scratches her belly.

WALT (CONT'D)
You take it easy, old gal. You good old girl.

Walt gets up and walks away without looking back.

Phong is stunned, she is silent for once.

INT. VFW.

Walk walks in and sits down. He nods to the regulars.

WALT
Good afternoon gentlemen.

DARREL
Walter, how are you doing?

WALT
Never been better.

BARTENDER
Beer and a shot, Walt?

CONTINUED:

WALT
I think I'll have something different.

Walt looks at the liquor display. At the pinnacle of bottles sits a bottle of Jonny Walker Blue.

WALT (CONT'D)
Think I'll try that Jonny Walker *Blue Label*.

The regulars all 'Oooooo' and 'Ahhhhhhh' at Walt's order.

MEL
Whatta ya win the lottery, Wally?

WALT
Naw, just having something special.

Walt sips his Scotch and nods. It's good.

WALT (CONT'D)
Why don't you get all the guys the same.

BARTENDER
You sure?

WALT
I'm sure. This is too good not to be shared.

Walt finishes his Scotch and points for one more. Several regulars hold up their drinks towards Walt.

INT. VFW. PHONEBOOTH.

Walt slips into the phonebooth. He puts in change and dials.

CUT TO:

INT. TAO'S HOUSE - SAME.

Sue weakly answers the phone next to her bed.

SUE
Hello?

WALT O.S.
It's Walt. The key to my front door is under the ceramic turtle. Open the door and go let your brother out of the cellar. I have to go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The line goes dead as Walt hangs up. Sue jumps up out of bed, pulls on some clothes and runs down stairs.

Phong blocks her path. Phong grabs Sue by the arms.

PHONG (SUBTITLED)
Who was that? Where are you going? You tell me what's going on?!

Sue squirms away from Phong and runs outside. On her way over to Walt's house, she sees Daisy leashed to Phong's chair. It scares Sue even more.

EXT. SMOKIE'S DUPLEX - AFTERNOON.

Father Janovich paces back and forth. The SQUAD CAR pulls up to him, which is exactly what he's been afraid of all day.

OFFICER
Sorry Father, we have to go.

FATHER JANOVICH
I'm telling you. If we're not here, there will be bloodshed.

OFFICER
We've been here for hours. We can't afford to anchor a unit to one location.

FATHER JANOVICH
I'm begging you to stay.

OFFICER
I just got word from my Sargent, we're pulling the plug.

FATHER JANOVICH
I'm staying.

OFFICER
No you aren't. My orders are specific. You came with us, you're leaving with us.

Father Janovich looks hard at the duplex before getting into the SQUAD CAR. The SQUAD CAR drives off.

Walt pulls up in front, gets out his pick-up and slams the door. He looks at the duplex. It's a total eyesore.

CONTINUED:

WALT (MUTTERS)
What a goddamned mess. You slopes should be ashamed of yourselves.

Walt walks up the sidewalk and stops twenty feet from the duplex.

Six very scared, very jittery Hmong gangbangers look out at Walt from various doorways and window.

WALT
Is that all you swamp rats or is there more vermin scurrying in the shadows?

Smokie and Spider step out and stand on the porch. Smokie smiles at Walt. Walt spits on the ground.

SMOKIE
I wasn't sure that you'd...

WALT
Shut up gook. I'm not here to listen to one goddamned syllable of what a shrimp-dicked, little baby midget like you has to say.

Spider pulls his PISTOL.

WALT (CONT'D)
That's right, boy. Defend your boyfriend after *he* or *you* or whoever rapes a member of your family. Your own blood, for Christ's sake. Go ahead, pull your pistols, just like a bunch of ridiculous miniature toy cowboys.

Smokie and several other Hmong gangbangers pull their guns.

WALT
You have no honor. You're the scum of the earth and when you're gone, do you think anyone will care? No one will mourn. You won't be missed.

All the Hmong are spooked at Walt's absolute lack of fear.

SMOKIE
Where's Tao old man? He too scared to come and stick up for himself?

WALT
No. Tao is too good for this. You pukes aren't worth one second of his time.

CONTINUED:

Walt slowly puts a CIGARETTE in his mouth. Even this slight movement has the gangbangers waving for their PISTOLS around.

Walt laughs.

WALT
You boys are a little bit jumpy.

SPIDER
You watch it old man.

WALT
No, I think you'd better watch it.

Walt looks around. Other then the gangbangers, a small group of people have gathered to watch this showdown.

CUT TO:

INT. WALT'S HOUSE.

Sue opens the front door, runs to the stairwell and pounds down the stairs.

SUE
Tao? Tao are you alright?

TAO O.S.
I"M DOWN HERE! LET ME OUT!!

She unlocks the CELLAR DOOR. Tao comes out in a rage.

TAO
Goddamn it!

SUE
What's going on?

TAO
He left without me!

SUE
Where? Where'd he go?!

TAO
He went to Smokie's without me.

Tao takes the stairs two steps at a time.

SUE
No! No Tao!

Sue grabs Tao's legs and hangs on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUE
No! Don't you dare! Stay away from them, Tao! I don't want anyone else getting hurt.

TAO
Leave me alone.

SUE
NO TAO. NO!

They struggle at the top of the stairs and spill into the kitchen floor. Tao runs for the door when something catches his eye...

The kitchen table.

The RIFLE and PISTOL are still there.

Walt purposely left the guns at home.

TAO
Oh God! NO!!

QUICK CUT BACK TO:

EXT. SMOKIE'S DUPLEX - SAME.

WALT AND COMPANY...

WALT
Anybody got a light? *No?* I got one.

Walt's slight grin fades. He mutters to himself...

WALT
Hail Mary, full of grace.

Walt reaches into his coat pocket. Six Hmong gangbangers simultaneously level their PISTOLS and FIRE.

BULLETS FLY. Walt is struck down. People scream.

Walt falls dead. A ZIPPO lighter clutched in his hand. Walt never intended to kill anyone. Self-sacrifice.

EXT. SMOKIE'S DUPLEX - LATER.

Tao and Sue arrive just as Smokie, Spider and company are being driven away in Police cars.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tao looks at Smokie in the squad car. Smokie no longer looks tough or hard, he just looks scared.

On the street Walt is being bagged by the ambulance crew. Father Janovich prays over him.

Tao steps up to a Police Officer.

TAO
What happened?

POLICE OFFICER
You have to step back.

TAO
He was a friend of mine.

POLICE OFFICER
I said step back.

Tao turns to the HMONG POLICE OFFICER

TAO
What happened, man?

The Hmong Police Officer looks at the WHITE POLICE OFFICER and then at Tao.

HMONG POLICE
You heard him, step back.

Tao speaks to the HMONG OFFICER in their native language.

TAO (SUBTITLED)
Please man, it's important. He's my friend. Tell me what happened?

HMONG POLICE (SUBTITLED)
The old guy reaches for a lighter and they gunned him down. The gang said the old guy was here to kill them, but he didn't have a weapon.

TAO (SUBTITLED)
What's going to happen?

HMONG POLICE (SUBTITLED)
We actually have witnesses for once. These guys are going away big time.

The WHITE OFFICER yells at the HMONG OFFICER.

CONTINUED:

POLICE OFFICER
Officer Chang, get those people back.

HMONG POLICE
Yes sir. You have to step back now.

Tao hugs his sister. Sue openly weeps. Tao holds it in. He looks at his friend Walt as the bag is zipped over him.

EXT. TAO'S HOUSE - DAY.

Tao and Sue wait in front. Tao wears a suit, Sue is in a traditional Hmong dress. A TAXI pulls up and they get in.

Sitting on the porch is Phong who rocks back and forth in her rocking chair. Phong holds Daisy in her arms, gently petting the old dog.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH.

We're at the funeral of Walter Kowalski. Walt is dressed in his new suit.

Along with the crowd you'd expect, Tao and Sue are seated near the front.

Walt's sons and family are there. Mitch gives Tao a dirty look. Tao looks back at him, his gaze bores right through Mitch. Mitch looks away.

Father Janovich steps up to the pulpit and speaks.

FATHER JANOVICH
Walt Kowolski once said to me I didn't know anything about life or death because I was an overeducated, 27 year old virgin who held the hands of superstitious old woman and promised them eternity'. Walt definitely had no problem 'calling it like he saw it'. But Walt was right. I knew really nothing about life or death until I got to know Walt. And boy, did I learn.

INT. LAW OFFICE.

All of Walt's family are seated in an office as a LAWYER reads Walt Kowalski's will.

Tao is present along with Walt's family.

LAWYER
Which brings us to our last item. And again, please forgive the language used in Mr. Kowalski's will. I'm simply reading it as it was written.

The LAWYER takes a sip of water before reading...

LAWYER
And to my friend, Tao Vang Lor, I leave my 1972 Gran Torino on the condition that you don't choptop the roof like a damned spick, don't paint any idiotic flames on it like some whitetrash hillbilly and don't put a big gay spoiler on the rear end like you see on all the other zipper head's cars. It just looks like hell. If you can refrain from doing any of that, it's yours.